Let US troops rescue Burnhams, GMA urged

STORY BELOW, COL 1

IN *Saturday*SPECIAL

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

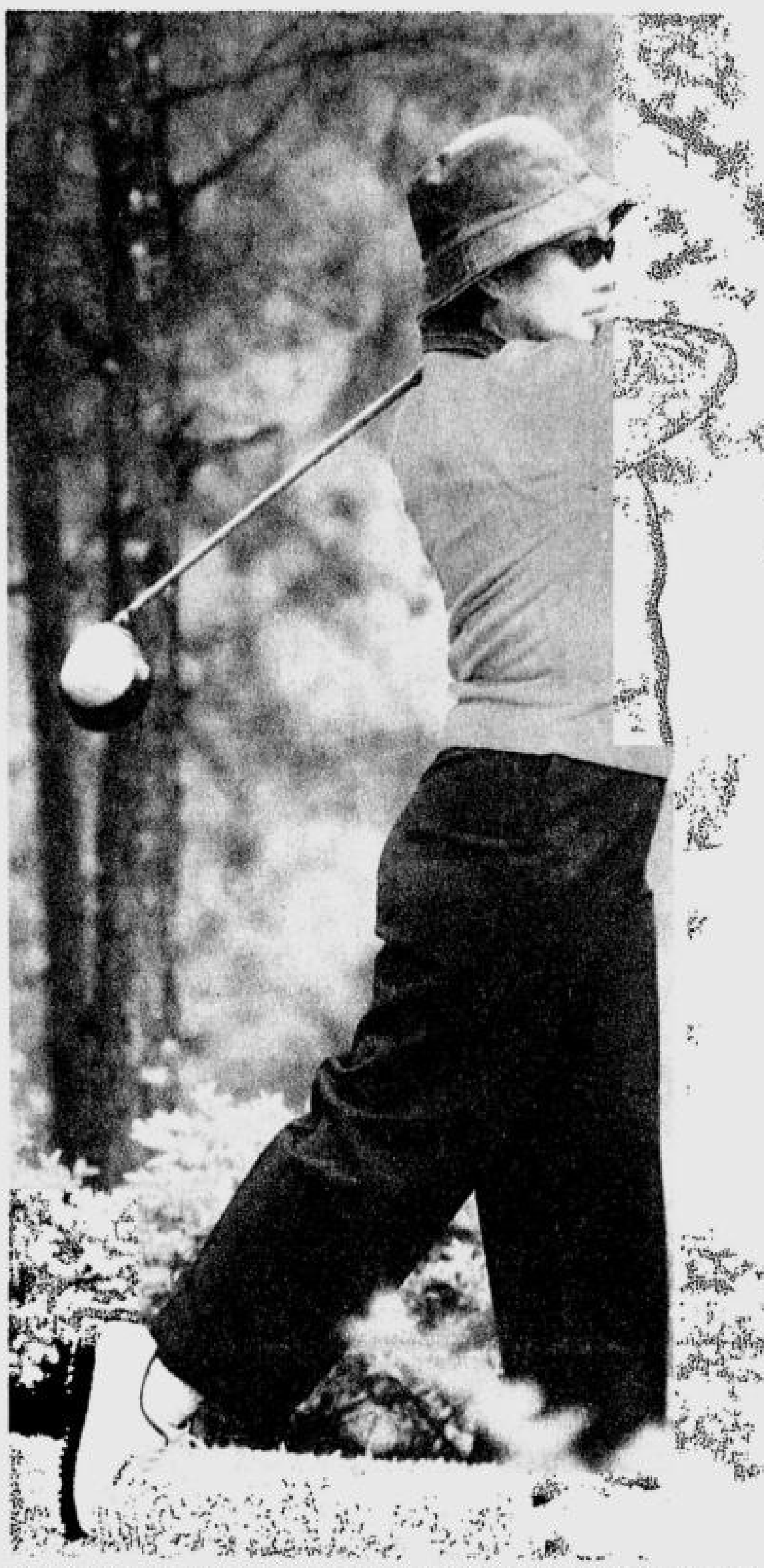
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2001 ★ 58 PAGES 6 SECTIONS VOL.17 NO. 21 ₱15

To temper temper Gloria counts to 30

BY D. PAZZIBUGAN AND PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

SOME people need only to count up to 10, but President Macapagal-Arroyo will

TO/ A4



MEANWHILE, President Macapagal moves over to the Baguio Country Club away from the "gray area" of contention.

EDWIN BACASMAS

Big Chill: Gloria ignores Ramos

FVR says he's not 'anointing' presidential candidate

BY VINCENT CABREZA
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—The Macapagal-Ramos break is out in the open.

A giddy and playful President Macapagal-Arroyo hammered her way through the Camp John Hay golf course here on Thursday without a familiar golfing partner, former President Fidel Ramos.

Yesterday, Ramos himself was at Camp John Hay for the inaugural of the Club John Hay Manor where the President was expected to be the guest of honor but instead sent a representative.

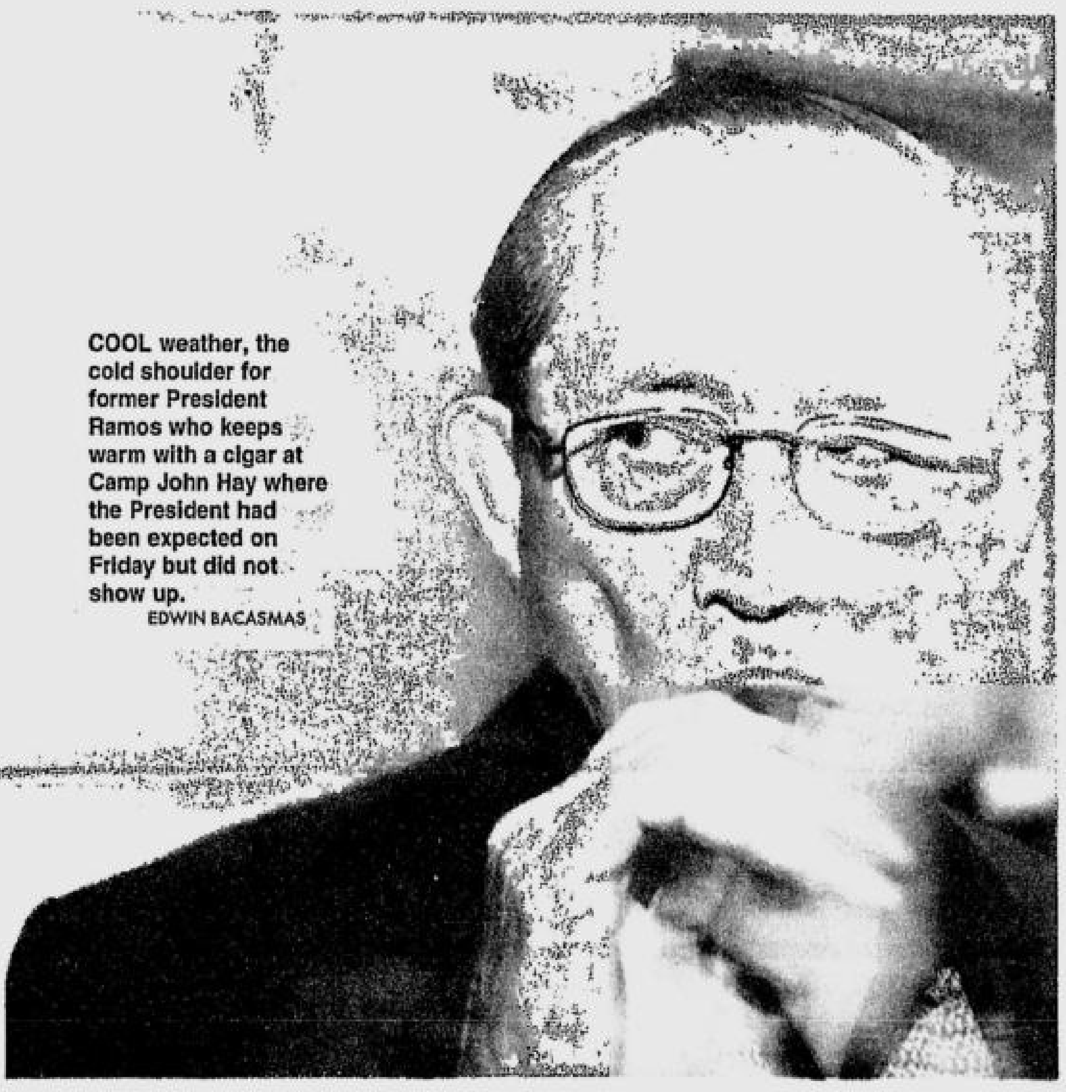
While Ramos was at John Hay, the President decided to play golf at the Baguio Country Club.

On the same day, Ms Macapagal herself declared at the presidential Mansion here, she may not even wish to meet Ramos to discuss his supposed plan to test in the 2004 presidential election a constitutional prohibition barring any ex-president, who had served a full six-year term, from running again for reelection.

Ramos himself had a mouthful to say. He was not about to "anoint" a presidential candidate, he told reporters. He is chair emeritus and founder of Lakas-NUCD-UMDP. His party, he added, has not yet considered potential candidates for the 2004 presidential elections.

"Only the Good Lord anoints people, not me. I am just a private citizen . . . The Lakas-NUCD-UMDP and Kampi (Ms Macapagal's party) will have an official candidate in the year 2004, *pero hindi ako iyon* (But I am not that person)," he said.

BIG/ A4



COOL weather, the cold shoulder for former President Ramos who keeps warm with a cigar at Camp John Hay where the President had been expected on Friday but did not show up.

EDWIN BACASMAS

Let US troops rescue Burnhams, Kansas lawmaker urges GMA

AN AMERICAN congressman is visiting Manila to press President Macapagal-Arroyo to call in US troops to rescue two American missionaries held hostage by Abu Sayyaf bandits on Basilan island since May.

"The whole purpose of the trip is to try to get our troops involved in the rescue. We have highly trained, highly skilled professionals at hostage rescue but we are always courteous to ask for the invitation from the government," Republican Rep. Todd Tiahrt of Kansas said.

"We haven't had the invitation yet."

Tiahrt is mounting a personal mission of mercy, hoping to secure the release of Christian missionaries Martin and Gracia Burnham, who he says will die if they are not

LET/ A16

'No gray area; law's very clear'

BY JULIET L. JAVELLANA

FORMER President Fidel Ramos should run first before the Supreme Court can rule on a "gray area" in the constitutional ban against ex-presidents seeking reelection, according to a constitutional expert.

The chair of the House committee on constitutional amendments, Rep. Antonio Eduardo B. Nachura (Samar, LP), who is an authority on constitutional law, said the high court would only exercise its power of judicial review if an actual controversy has occurred.

He said the one who seeks clarification must also be the "proper party," meaning he must be someone who has been "injured or is in imminent danger of sustaining injury from the law."

This person must be a former president wanting to run again.

Nachura's view is that there is no gray area contrary to that of Ramos who, after denying his in-

NO/ A4

Cops arrest Jordanian linked to al-Qaida group

BY TONETTE OREJAS
PDI Central Luzon Desk
AND TJ BURGONIO

POLICE arrested on Thursday a suspected member of Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida terrorist cell in the country and seized 281 sticks of dynamite from his rented apartment in Balanga City, Bataan.

Hadi Yousef Alghoul, a Jordanian, was first arrested in 1995 after he was linked to the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York in December 1993, according to Supt. Perfecto Palad, Bataan police director.

The Jordanian was subsequently released after police got a clearance that he was just a namesake of one of the suspects in the WTC

COPS/ A16

IN FULL battle gear, American soldiers give their Filipino counterparts a hand in the pursuit of the Abu Sayyaf bandits in Basilan.

DENNIS SABANGAN

Nur doesn't want to be sent home

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia—Moro rebel leader Nur Misuari, who is being held in Malaysia, expressed hope that he won't be deported to the Philippines, where he is wanted for igniting a rebellion.

The wife of Misuari, who was allowed to see him Thursday, said that the former governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao hopes that Malaysia won't make good on promises to deport him. Malaysia has vowed to do so by mid-January.

"My husband believes that the Malaysian government will not

NUR/ A4

Chilling signs show Osama not spent force

KABUL/WASHINGTON—Afghanistan said on Thursday that Osama bin Laden had escaped to neighboring Pakistan but the head of a radical Islamic group said to be sheltering the world's most wanted man poured cold water on the charge.

In other chilling signs that Bin Laden and his al-Qaida network were not yet a spent force, Bin Laden himself vowed destruction was assured for the United States even if he was killed, and there was a report of an assassination attempt against the commander of US forces in Afghanistan.

US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld did not rule out that Bin Laden, chief suspect in Sept. 11 suicide plane attacks on the United States, had fled Afghanistan for another country but said he had stopped chasing reports of his whereabouts.

"We hear six, seven, eight, 10, 12 conflicting reports every day. I've stopped chasing them," Rumsfeld told reporters at the Pentagon.

"We do know of certain knowledge he is either in Afghanistan or some other country or dead and we know of certain knowledge that we don't know which of those happens to be the case."

The Afghan Defense Ministry said Bin Laden had slipped into Pakistan and was being protected by followers of Islamic radical leader, Maulana Fazalur Rehman, who had helped create the Taliban, the ousted government the United States charged had given sanctuary to Bin Laden.

"Bin Laden and his men are no longer here," said ministry spokesperson Mohamad Habeel, who would not reveal his sources and said he did not know where in Pakistan Bin Laden was.

Rehman denied the report. "This is a political gimmick," he told Reuters from his home in northwest Pakistan where he is under house arrest.

CHILLING/ A16

ABS-CBN lays off 150 workers

BY BLANCHE S. RIVERA AND ELENA R. TORRIJOS

ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp., the broadcast arm of the Lopez family empire, will lay off at least 150 employees amid sharp declines in advertising revenue and gloomy prospects next year.

Some of ABS-CBN's major tal-

ABS-CBN/ A16

Second FRONT PAGE

DI PA RIN MARAMPAMAN

GMA's 'Ulat' fails to live up to billing

BY DONA Z. PAZZIBUGAN, GERALD G. LACUARTA AND VINCENT CABREZA AND DESIREE CALUZA
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo's first of a three-part year-end "Ulat sa Bayan" (Report to the Nation) yesterday failed to live up to some people's expectations.

Observers said it appeared to be more of a classroom discussion, a scripted one at that.

The President took 10 phoned-in questions from supposedly ordinary people from different parts of the country.

Rather than air their opinions and specific concerns, the callers asked the President about economic topics.

A male caller from Laoag City asked for her four-point economic agenda.

A caller from Sampaloc, Manila, asked how globalization affects the country.

A female caller from Nueva Ecija and another from Camarines Sur asked what a four-percent inflation rate (the projected inflation rate for 2001) meant.

A man from Tanauan, Batangas, asked how Ms Macapagal was able to stabilize the peso-dollar exchange rate, while another from Tawi-Tawi asked what debt servicing meant.

Ms Macapagal, an economist, ended up explaining some economic concepts while admitting that translating the country's year-end economic gains into terms the ordinary Filipino could understand was not easy.

The "Ulat" was moderated by former Neda chief and administration senatorial candidate Solita "Winnie" Monsod. The rest of the three-part series will be telecast at 8 a.m. today and on Sunday, Dec. 30.

The President said few people realized the breaks the Philippines has been getting compared to the other countries affected by the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the United States.

Ms Macapagal's year-end progress report boasted of sturdy Filipino economics amid the recession being felt in the US, Japan and most developed countries.

She said the country has achieved a manageable fiscal deficit problem, has kept inflation at 4.4 percent and has maintained the peso at an average exchange rate of P51 to the dollar.

She said her new focus would be to stage-manage reforms in the banking sector in order to maintain interest rates, as well as sustain transportation and rice prices, to keep the inflation rate low.

These economic policies fortified the domestic economy, Ms Macapagal said, and helped shield most Filipinos from the recession that is hitting other countries.

The President admitted to Monsod, however, that her upbeat report might not be digestible to a frustrated public.

EDWIN BACASMAS

THE PRESIDENT admitted translating economic jargon to layman's terms is not easy, during yesterday's "Ulat sa Bayan."

"*Siguro mas mararamdaman nila kung bumagsak ang ating ekonomiya. Kasi mas mararamdaman mo pag* negative, *kesa* positive. *Siyempre maraming* subjective, *sasabihin mas mataas ang ekonomiya noon kesa ngayon. Pero nawalan ba sila ng trabaho? Sa bawa't nawalan ng trabaho, may dalawang nagkaroon ng trabaho* (Maybe the public will only feel it if the economy collapses. That's because people feel negative changes more than positive ones. Of course, there will be subjective perspectives, some will say the economy was better last year. But did they lose their jobs? For every job lost, two were employed this year)," Ms Macapagal said.

Despite a Presidential snub *(see headline story on page 1)*, former President Fidel Ramos said at a press conference at Camp John Hay yesterday afternoon that the Macapagal administration was closer to straightening out the country's economic problems.

Ramos did not say if he was happy with Ms Macapagal's economic formula, although he acknowledged that the country's gross domestic product did not plunge compared to Hong Kong, Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia after the terrorist attacks on the US.

Like the Philippines, Vietnam and Southern China also posted positive figures, Ramos said.

Ramos said Ms Macapagal's policies have helped push the GDP to a 3.2 percent growth target.

"But seasonally, the fourth quarter is the best quarter for the Philippines. This is uniquely Filipino. There are normal typhoons and this year agriculture was normally good," he said.

But for the country's militant labor groups, the President's "Ulat sa Bayan" was a "Gulat sa Bayan."

Victor Briz, president of the Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino, said the latter was a more apt label for the President's report that depicted false "clear skies" for an economy that would soon be ravaged by pro-globalization policies.

"GMA's statistics of economic growth and the resiliency of the Philippine economy are truly startling for the workers and the poor, who could only foresee more economic hardships in the coming year," Briz said.

"For the majority of the Filipino people, growth in the GNP is mere jargon that translates to an increase in the Gutom na Pilipino (hungry Filipinos)," he said.

Briz said it was absurd for the President to make workers believe in her assurances of an economic recovery, "when the only words we hear from our employers are retrenchment, closure and wage freeze."

Briz noted that the third quarter data of the National Statistics Office (NSO) belied the President's report.

The NSO statistics said manufacturing output fell by 10.1 percent compared to the previous year.

"The country's volume of production index has registered a decline for the seventh straight month. Unemployment in industry is rising as competition is heightened due to GMA's subservience to globalization," Briz said.

'Bagong Buwan' gets bishops' nod

BY ARMAND N. NOCUM

THE CATHOLIC Bishops Conference of the Philippines has endorsed the movie "Bagong Buwan," saying it will help Christians to get a better understanding of Muslims and the Mindanao problem.

In an endorsement letter circulated to the media, CBCP president Archbishop Orlando Quevedo said the movie would also help dispel long-established biases against the Muslim minority among Filipino Christians.

"It is a movie about Muslims and Christians that surely challenges the consciousness of our Christian majority," he said.

He said the movie "portrays the conflict in Mindanao from a Muslim perspective."

The average Christian is "usually not privy to this perspective," the Cotabato archbishop said.

He said a Muslim's view of cultural, economic, political and religious reality "is quite different from that of a Christian."

It is the failure to understand such views that has led to centuries of tension between Christians and Muslims in the Philippines, he said.

"Generations belonging to each group grew up with their respective biases and prejudices. Such prejudices reach their peak in times of war, as in the 'all-out war' against the MILF and Abu Sayyaf in the year 2000," he said.

But this is not unusual in countries of different cultures, where "history records the perceptions or interpretations of reality held by the dominant culture," Quevedo said.

And even if he acknowledge that the movie "could swing the pendulum of perspective to the opposite extreme, it would still raise questions on the dominant cultural view," Quevedo said.

"Bagong Buwan indeed challenges Christians to understand the perspective of Muslims on life, culture and religion, politics and economic development, justice and peace," the letter said.

"By so doing, the movie teaches us about the futility of war and violence," it said.

"The ultimate lesson of the movie is a new paradigm of hope. A culture of peace in our land can be built on mutual respect, understanding and dialogue," Quevedo said.

The movie, which stars Cesar Montano and was directed by Marilou Diaz-Abaya, tells the story of Muslim families and children caught up in the war, and of the strength of family love in the midst of conflict.

It is produced by Margie Moran-Floirendo.

Abaya, in an earlier interview with the INQUIRER, described the film as being neither "pro-Muslim nor pro-military" but "pro-peace."

'Bukidnon violent? No way!' Zubiris cry

SAYING "Bukidnon is safer than Belfast," provincial officials have protested a British advisory against travel to the province.

Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri said the inclusion of Bukidnon in the British Embassy's latest advisory to its nationals "has no basis in fact and is as fictional as a Shakespearean play."

"The Brits are just true to form—they are entirely clueless as to what's happening in my province, which is not only Mindanao's most progressive but also its most peaceful," Zubiri said.

Zubiri said a British citizen "would feel more safe walking the streets of Malaybalay, Bukidnon's capital, at midnight than of strife-torn Belfast, Northern Ireland, at noon."

Bukidnon Gov. Jose Zubiri, the congressman's father, said the province, while a part of Mindanao, is "very very far" from the region's hotspots.

"People are just busy making a living here. Kidnapping has never been and never will be a cottage industry in my province," he said, referring to the notoriety gained by parts of Mindanao where abductions of foreigners and locals have occurred.

This was probably why Bukidnon was not included in the recent travel advisories issued by the United States, France, Japan and Canada, the governor added.

"There are no car bombs going off in Bukidnon, there are no racial riots here and certainly there are no touring hooligans," Zubiri said, referring to the Protestant-Catholic strife in Northern Ireland, recent attacks on immigrants in Great Britain and British soccer fans who are notorious for their violent conduct.

The Zubiris were strongly reacting to recent advisories issued by Great Britain, the United States, Canada, France and Japan to their nationals against travel to certain provinces in Mindanao because of security concerns.

The provinces, aside from Bukidnon, were Basilan, Tawi-Tawi, Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur, Maguindanao, Lanao del Norte, Lanao del Sur, Sultan Kudarat, and North and South Cotabato.

One government official who welcomed the travel advisories was Tourism Secretary Richard J. Gordon.

Gordon said the other day the advisories were well-taken and were an improvement over previous advisories which made blanket warnings.

Yesterday, Gordon said tourism promotion basics were in place and there was no way for the local tourism industry to go but up in the coming year.

In his New Year's Day message, Gordon said, "The memory of Sept. 11 shall have receded farther from the consciousness of the world, now dazzled by the victories of the allied forces in Afghanistan."

US happy with RP airport security

THE US Federal Aviation administration and the International Council on Aviation Organizations have pronounced themselves satisfied with the security measures at the country's four international airports.

The chief of the Air Transportation Office, Assistant Secretary Adelberto Yap, said the ATO recently received the security assessments from the two influential aviation monitoring agencies.

The US FAA and the Icao have called on all countries to improve their respective airports' security and safety standards following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the US which involved hijacked commercial aircraft.

"According to both bodies, the security measures at (the Philippines') four international airports are stricter than those of other countries in the region. These make both arriving and departing flights from the Philippines safer," Yap said.

Both the US FAA and the Icao, however, proposed that all four airports—the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, the Mactan International Airport, the Davao International Airport and the Laoag International Airport—be placed under one supervising agency.

Yap said the US FAA and the Icao noted that the separate authorities governing the four airports do not only have overlapping functions, they also have indistinguishable rules and regulations that only confuse the industry.

He proposed that Congress pass legislation to create an airport superbody to oversee the operations of the four major international airports, the alternative international airports in Clark Field, Pampanga, and Subic, Zambales, and the domestic airports.

The US FAA and the Icao are monitoring aviation security and safety measures in many countries as part of the global anti-terrorist campaign that followed the Sept. 11 attacks on the US. *Norman Bordadora*

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Solon scores selling of fireworks in metro malls

A QUEZON CITY legislator has urged authorities to ban immediately the sale of pyrotechnics in Metro Manila shopping malls, warning that these could be used by terrorists to cause deadly explosions.

Rep. Ismael Mathay III sought the ban after seeing firecrackers and pyrotechnics being sold in one of the biggest department store chains in Metro Manila last Sunday.

"I was really alarmed when I saw boxes of fireworks being sold in the malls within reach of young children and teenagers," Mathay said.

Mathay said he was worried that terrorists could use the firecrackers on display to injure people.

"Remember, all the terrorists need to do is throw a lighted cigarette butt into the displays," Mathay said.

He said the sale of firecrackers in the malls undermines the efforts of the Philippine National Police to secure these establishments against criminals and possible terrorist attacks during the holidays.

He urged the interior department and the PNP to lose no time in banning the sale of pyrotechnics in malls.

"Local chief executives can exercise their broad powers under the Local Government Code to prohibit the sale, distribution and even display of firecrackers and fireworks in shopping malls as these may cause undue harm to the safety and security of mall patrons," Mathay said.

He said there had been cases in the past of pyrotechnics that were being retailed in open spaces exploding and harming people.

"Let's not wait for this to happen before taking action," said the neophyte congressman.

Mathay urged shopping mall operators to take the initiative in withdrawing the sale of pyrotechnics in their establishments.

He said this kind of harmful merchandise should only be sold in open spaces away from residential areas and under the supervision of authorities. ***Juliet Labog-Javellana***

PNP, NBI asked: What became of Dec. 30 bombings probe?

By Gerald G. Lacuarta and Cynthia D. Balana

WHATEVER has become of the official investigation into the Dec. 30, 2000 bombings that hit Metro Manila, killing 15 and injuring scores of innocent people?

A militant group yesterday asked the Philippine National Police and the National Bureau of Investigation to produce their respective reports on the bombings whose anniversary falls tomorrow.

The Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) pointed out that the PNP and NBI have not come out with a report since their investigation of the series of powerful bomb attacks in five places in the metropolis last Dec. 30 began.

"They (PNP and NBI) are supposed to disclose the outcome of their investigation but up to now, they have kept the people guessing and this is absolutely unfair," the group said in a statement.

Rodolfo Sambajon, Pamalakaya chair, said the failure of the administration to solve the year-old case has become "lingering torture" to the victims' families.

Sambajon said President Macapagal-Arroyo should compel the PNP and the NBI to reveal their findings so the public could see how far along they are in the probe.

Sambajon blamed the administration for the slow pace of the investigation, saying the agencies charged with solving the Dec. 30 carnage seemed afraid of "finding out the truth."

"The Macapagal administration is afraid to unmask the perpetrators of the Dec. 30 massacre because big guns and untouchables were probably involved," Sambajon said.

He did not elaborate.

PNP Director General Leandro Mendoza, for his part, said, "We have good leads but we don't have concrete evidence," when asked if the PNP has arrested anybody in connection with the bombings.

NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco said three suspects have been arrested in connection with the Dec. 30 bombings.

One of them, Bassal Diamla, was arrested by the Presidential Security Group before he could detonate a bomb in Malacañang on the same day, according to Wycoco. The two other suspects were not identified.

The PNP had arrested some 20 Muslims residing in Taguig as the suspects but were forced to release them when the police failed to come up with evidence in court.

In a related police matter, Senate minority leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. yesterday asked the Department of Interior and Local Government and the PNP to explain the plan to terminate from the service some 20,000 policemen who have failed to comply with PNP educational requirements.

Pimentel said a number of issues should be resolved before the termination plan is implemented to make sure the PNP's functions are not undermined and to give the officers who will dislocated something to fall back on.

As of Nov. 30, the PNP had a total strength of 105,784.

During budget hearings at the Senate two weeks ago, the PNP asked for an additional 10,000 policemen but was authorized to hire only 3,000 under the 2002 national budget.

Pimentel said that if all the unqualified policemen were removed, there is a possibility they would resort to illegal activities given their training.

"In times like these, when people are hard-pressed to look for jobs, removing 20,000 policemen from work could create more problems for the country because some of them might be forced into criminal activities," Pimentel said.

He said the National Police Commission should consider resetting the deadline for compliance with police educational requirements to 2003 or 2004 or even 2005. Existing PNP laws require policemen to have college degrees.

A total of 27,497 PNP personnel were desk-bound or were performing administrative functions, according to Pimentel.

He said this number should be trimmed to a reasonable level so that more policemen could be assigned to field duty.

TRO on toll hike sought

PARAÑAQUE Rep. Eduardo Zialcita yesterday asked a city court to stop the plan to raise toll rates at the Skyway and South Luzon Expressway.

In a six-page petition for a temporary restraining order, Zialcita described the increase as "exorbitant, onerous, oppressive and unconscionable," particularly to residents of Parañaque.

"Toll increases will wreak undue hardship on all residents of Parañaque City, especially in the light of the present economic situation," Zialcita said.

Once the increase takes effect on Tuesday, a motorist using the Skyway from Magallanes in Makati to Bicutan in Parañaque would have to pay an additional P10 on top of the existing P55 fee, Zialcita said.

By June 30, 2002, the lawmaker said the same motorist would be required to pay P75, based on the petition by Citra Metro Manila Tollways Corp., which was granted by the Toll Regulatory Board.

Zialcita slammed the TRB for approving the petition for a "provisional" toll increase without a public hearing.

"The TRB's failure to conduct a public hearing and to issue a decision explaining the reasons or grounds upon which such a decision was based is fatal because it violates petitioner's right to due process," Zialcita said.

In an interview with the INQUIRER, Zialcita said the TRB decision was highly suspect since it was made when offices were closed and could not accommodate any petition from the public.

"Everybody was caught off-guard," he said.

Zialcita also pointed out that there was nothing in the law creating the TRB that allowed for a "provisional" increase in toll rates.

"It begs the question—are such increases merely provisional precisely because the TRB has yet to rule squarely on whether or not such increases are justified?" he asked. ***Christian Esguerra***

MABEY
THE AL BRIDGE PROG
MIYET BRIDGES"

BUILDING BRIDGES. Papua New Guinea Minister for Finance and Planning Andrew Kumbakor, second from right, and Deutsche Bank (UK) Ltd. vice president Piers Constable seal the deal to build over 100 bridges in Papua New Guinea. Looking on are PNG Secretary for Finance Vele Iamo, right, and Mabey and Johnson Ltd. director general for Asia and the Pacific David Forsyth.

RP span plan inspires others

THE PHILIPPINES' bridge program has inspired another country to adopt it.

Papua New Guinea's national bridge program, called "YuMiYet (You and Me Together) Bridges," will be patterned after the Philippines' President's Bridge Program which uses bridging technology from the United Kingdom.

The spans' modular design allows construction to be completed in four days, using local labor as part of the total manpower complement.

The standard-design steel bridges can last for 50 years and require little maintenance.

In the Philippines, the President's Bridge Program plans to complete over 1,300 bridges from Cagayan in the north to Tawi-tawi in the south.

" We are a young country and we can learn a lot from the Philippines," said PNG Minister for Finance and Planning Andrew Kumbakor. The Independent State of Papua New Guinea was established in 1975.

Papua New Guinea has a varied topography similar to the Philippines. It is located north of Australia.

Officials led by Kumbakor flew to Manila recently to sign a loan agreement with Mabey and Johnson Ltd., the UK-based builder of the bridges, and Deutsche Bank (UK) Ltd. for the construction of up to 116 bridges under the "YuMiYet" program.

Mabey and Johnson builds bridges for Britain's armed forces and international organizations like the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

In the Philippines, it has been contracted to build the bridges for the President's Bridge Program.

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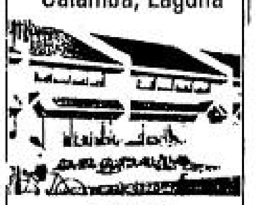

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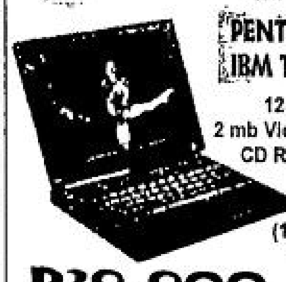

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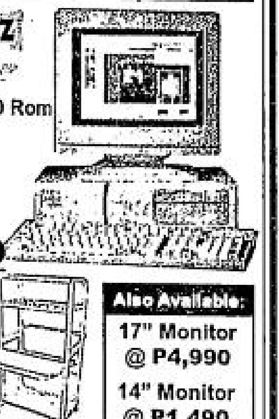

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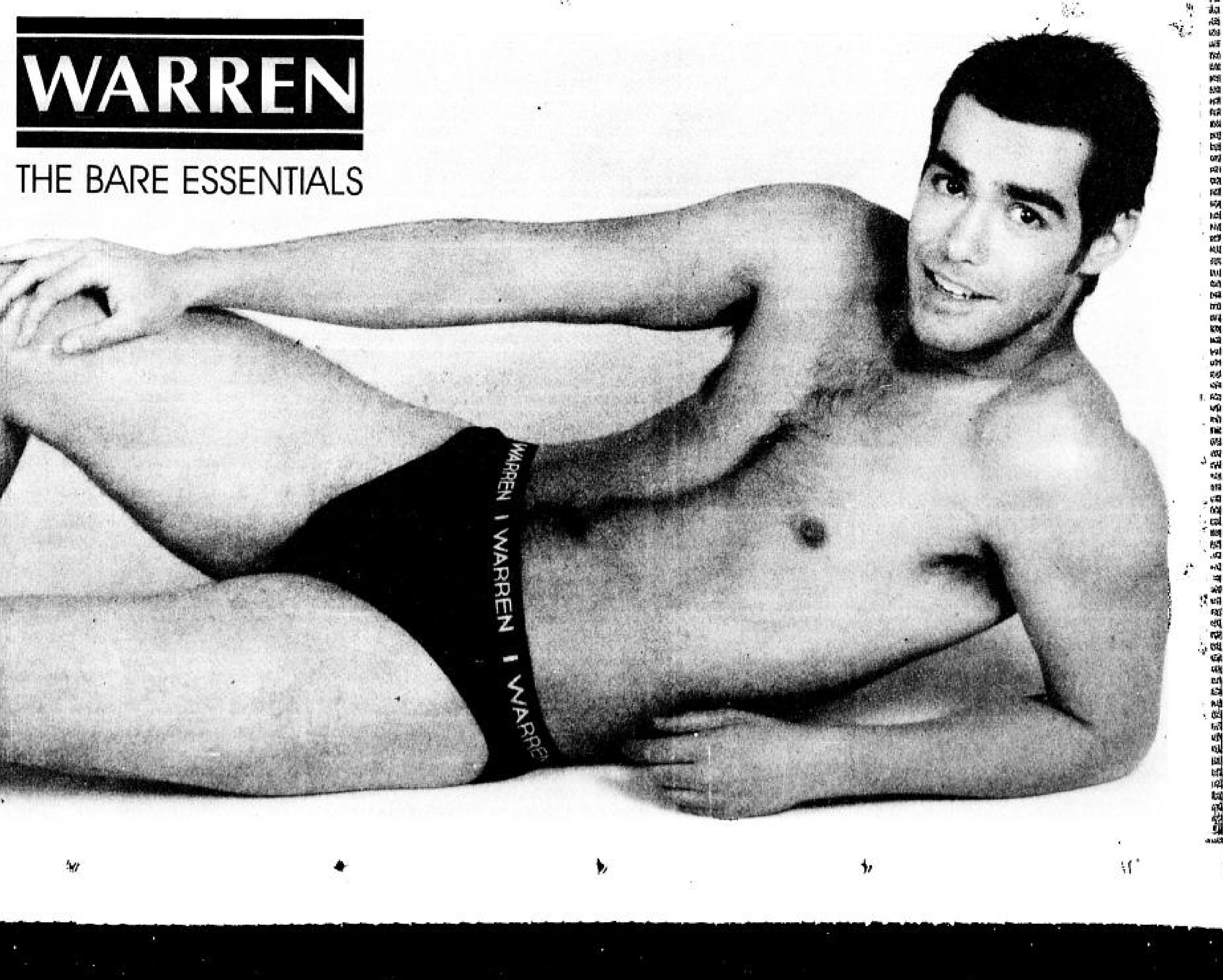

The Big Chill: Gloria ignores Ramos

(From page A1)

Strongly rumored to be eyeing the 2004 presidential election, Ramos had cited a "gray area" in the 1987 Constitution which he said could allow an ex-president to run for another term after an "interregnum" of six years.

But a Malacañang official in Ms Macapagal's New Year holiday entourage here said the Palace allowed the constitutional "gray area" to be discussed "to nip all rumors in the bud."

The President told reporters here that she was not about to comment on Ramos' political plans, and had suggested a recent talk with the 72-year-old former President had already taken place—although on issues that did not involve the supposed comeback plan of Ramos.

Evasive

Solita Monsod, who hosted the first of a three-part special telecast of "May Gloria ang Bukas Mo," peppered Ms Macapagal with questions about Ramos before the broadcast.

But Ms Macapagal kept parrying them.

"Aren't you playing golf with (Ramos and Speaker Jose de Venecia) today, I read that in the newspapers." Monsod asked.

"I don't know, I don't know, the (newspapers) always say I am playing with them but you know . . . ," Ms Macapagal protested.

"Of course, there's a chance (I'd be meeting Ramos on the golf course), but I don't know. Because every day you don't know who you're going to play golf with. Right now, I don't know who I'd be playing with," she said.

Ramos, who drew the most attention at the Manor, said he had not seen Ms Macapagal since his arrival here Friday morning.

He said Ms Macapagal would receive him at her leisure because the President's time "is very hectic."

The President's special representative at the inaugural of the John Hay Manor, former Nueva Ecija Rep. Renato Diaz, said Ms Macapagal was not trying to avoid Ramos.

He said Ms Macapagal was certain to meet Ramos today after her short trip to Besao, Mt. Province, after the second telecast of her economic report to the nation.

Discreet meetings

Ramos himself dismissed talks that the President was avoiding him: "We already met on Dec. 21, and again on Dec. 22. It was just not publicized."

Ramos admitted that he had been meeting discreetly with Ms Macapagal, and eight other people at her home on Dec. 22, for a conference related to her economic agenda.

"But let her spokesman make that announcement," Ramos said. "I have already denied any ambitions for a presidential position or seat in 2004. I said what I am doing now as ex-president, as a concerned private citizen . . . maybe I can be called an elder (member) of the family, is to me more important than being president of the Philippines," he said. Diaz, who played golf with Ramos, said that he was there "to relay to the President (Ramos') offer to pay his respects to her (Ms Macapagal) today (Saturday)," he said.

Diaz's remarks raised speculations anew that Palace officials themselves had floated the Ramos story as a diversion from accusations against Ms Macapagal of graft in a telecommunications scandal involving her husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo, and controversial businessman Pacifico Marcelo.

Marcelo accused Mr. Arroyo of receiving P40 million to support legislation creating a telecommunications clearing house that would have benefited his firm, the Philippine Telecommunications Clearing House.

He later amended his accusation against Mr. Arroyo during a Senate blue ribbon committee inquiry and accused the President of demanding 51 percent of his firm's shares in exchange for approval of the measure. The measure had been vetoed by the President.

Black prop

Ms Macapagal briefly discussed the Marcelo controversy during her weekly telecast of "May Gloria ang Bukas Mo," on Friday, and described it as black propaganda which, she said, she was not inclined to address.

The President acknowledged during the broadcast that black propaganda continues to hound her family, particularly Mr. Arroyo, apparently because of her projected election plans in 2004.

She spelled out a litany of what she considered propaganda issues, beginning with her public war with Marcelo.

Poor Mike

"*Kawawa naman* (*si* Mike) . . . *Una, si* Marcelo *daw, binigyan niya ng P40* million *ang asawa ko* (First, Marcelo supposedly bribed my husband with P40 million). In the first place, *hindi siya kilala ng asawa ko. Tignan mo, in the end, binaligtad niya ang istorya niya. Ako naman ngayon ang humihingi ng 51* percent (My husband doesn't even know Marcelo. But look, in the end he changed his story. Now I am being accused of soliciting 51 shares of his company)," the President told Monsod.

Ms Macapagal claimed Marcelo was apparently inspired to engineer a new accusation after he slipped through the back entrance of the Palace to meet with her.

"It was all his doing. He told me he was not ready to be seen by media. He said he wanted to meet me outside Malacañang, but I told him I would not, 'If we are going to meet let's meet in Malacañang.' This is black propaganda," she said in Filipino.

She also assailed Linda Montayre, chair of the Philippine Consultative Assembly (PCA), who accused the President of earning a P20-million commission from the so-called coconut levy deal with businessman Eduardo Cojuangco Jr.

Montayre is known as an ally of Ramos. The PCA is chaired by Ramos' former Budget Secretary Salvador Enriquez.

No comment

Later, Ms Macapagal told reporters that she would not respond to questions linking her to a series of scandals hurled by Marcelo and the PCA and the recent speculation about Ramos' presidential plans.

"Didn't I tell (Montayre and other critics) meant nothing to me. I will say the same thing. They mean nothing to me," she said.

But when asked directly about Ramos, she curtly replied: "No comment."

But Ms Macapagal opened up upon the prodding of Monsod about the impact of the 2004 election on her administration.

"(Media and critics) have been attributing motives. I mean, *meron bang pangulong hindi pumupunta sa probinsiya? Pagdating sa probinsiya, 'andiyan running for election na. Puwede ba namang nandoon lang ako sa opisina ko sa* Malacañang? (Is there a president who never visited the provinces? As soon as I reach the provinces, then talks surface that I am campaigning for the presidential elections. I can't very well stay forever in my office in Malacañang?)," she lamented.

"*Meron bang pangulong hindi pupunta sa squatter area, eh di anong klaseng pangulo siya?* (Is there a president who won't even visit the squatters' area, so what sort of president is that?)."

Period. Period

Ramos said he was neither aiming for the presidency nor nurturing to be Ms Macapagal's potential rival in 2004.

"I am not about to become a candidate for 2004. So I am saying again, I am not about to become a candidate for 2004. Period. Period. Period," Ramos told reporters here.

"It's too early to be talking about these things, because the people I represent at the grass roots are (confident) the first in priority is performance—especially getting us back to economic recovery."

He said all talks about testing the constitutional prohibition barring six-term presidents from seeking a new term had long been an academic issue that needed a final resolution from the Supreme Court.

"(The constitutional provision) is gray, and it started long ago, about whether ex-presidents can run after an interregnum. This in itself proves that this is a gray area, and there are some debates among constitutional experts and legal luminaries. I'm not one of those. But as I said, this is a special issue that must be addressed clearly by the Supreme Court," he said.

Former First Lady Ming Ramos echoed her husband's declaration, saying he was not running for office again. "Not, if I can help it," she said. ***With reports from Carlito Pablo and Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
Manila

ERRATA TO THE MANDATORY CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION (MCLE) IMPLEMENTING REGULATIONS, published in your paper last 16 November 2001.

1. The period for submission of an application for approval of a CLE activity or program as provided in paragraph (I) Section 7, and paragraph (a) Section 8, should be **forty-five (45) days**—not 90 days—prior to the presentation of the activity.
2. Section 14 on Reinstatement should be renumbered as **Section 13** for it follows Section 12.
3. Section 15 on Reporting Period after Reinstatement should be numbered as **Section 14.**
4. Section 16 on Schedule of Fees should be renumbered as **Section 15.**
5. Paragraphs (a) and (b) of Section 15 should read as follows:
   a. Fee to accompany application for accreditation as CLE provider.......... **P2,000.00 (P1,000.00 only for a government educational institution or office or an IBP chapter)**
   b. Fee to accompany application for approval of CLE activity..........**P100.00 per expected attendee, subject to verification of official attendance record submitted by the provider. (A government educational institution, office, or IBP chapter accredited as MCLE provider, shall pay a nominal fee of P500.00 per application for approval of MCLE activity/program.)**
6. The footnote in MCLE Form No. 02 should read as follows: **"Six (6) copies of this application and the attachments thereto should be submitted to the MCLE Committee at least 45 days before the presentation of the scheduled activity/program."**
7. The first paragraph of MCLE Form No. 02-A, Certificate of Approval of Program/Activity, should read as follows:

   "THIS IS TO CERTIFY that ______________________
   Name of Program / Activity
   scheduled on ______________________ to be held at
   ______________________ has been approved for MCLE
   Venue
   purposes subject to the observance of all undertakings and reportorial requirements by the Provider with office address at ______________________ which will provide the following program/activity."
8. **MCLE Form No. 02-B (MCLE Attendance Card)** should follow MCLE Form No. 02-A, thus:

MCLE Form No. 02-B

MCLE ATTENDANCE CARD

PROVIDER
ACTIVITY/PROGRAM
DATE
VENUE

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Signature: ______________
Address: ______________
Roll of Attorney: ______________
IBP Chapter: ______________
Telephone Number: ______________

TOPIC	TIME	CREDIT UNITS	STAMP/SIGNATURE OF MCLE MONITORS

Note: THIS CARD IS IRREPLACEABLE
(failure to submit it to the MCLE Provider of Monitor will result in forfeiture or loss of your credits)

MCLE ATTENDANCE CARD

PROVIDER
ACTIVITY/PROGRAM
DATE
VENUE

RECEIPT

Received from Atty. ______________________ his/her MCLE Attendance Card.

By: ______________________
PROVIDER OR MONITOR

9. The first paragraph of MCLE Form No. 07 should read as follows:

   "The Committee, on the basis of the report of the IBP Committee on Bar Discipline on Attorney ______________, has found cause to recommend that he/she be **suspended/delisted/readmitted** as a member of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines."

'No gray area; law's very clear'

(From page A1)

tention for a comeback in 2004, said the constitutional ban is "a gray area" which should be clarified by the Supreme Court.

Nachura said there is no such gray area or ambiguity in the Constitution as far as banning former presidents from seeking another term.

He said it is very clear from the Constitution that former Presidents Corazon Aquino, Fidel Ramos and Joseph Estrada can no longer aspire for the presidency even after a gap in their incumbency.

Only Estrada qualifies

But to Sen. Blas Ople, one of the framers of the 1987 Constitution, Estrada is qualified to run again.

Ople told a press conference yesterday that Estrada can still seek the presidency if exonerated of the plunder charges filed against him.

The possibility of Estrada running again in a presidential race if cleared was one of the gray areas Ramos was talking about that must be tested by the Supreme Court, Ople said.

He pointed out that Estrada served only two years of his six-year term.

"He (Estrada) was not impeached and he did not resign," Ople said. "In the case of former President Fidel Ramos, there is no gray area. He is prohibited," he said.

The Constitution prohibits a reelection of a president. It also prohibits the incumbent president from seeking the presidency if he or she has served four years of the term of office.

Ople said that Ms Macapagal could still run for president since she was not elected as such. Also she is only serving the remaining three and a half years of the unfinished term of Estrada who was ousted last January.

Nachura, a law graduate of San Sebastian, said he had been a student of constitutional law for 30 years and is now lecturing on the same subject at the UP Law Center, San Sebastian, UST, MLQU and Arellano University.

He served as education undersecretary during the Ramos administration.

"I recall to you, I was the only one who stood up in the Constitutional Commission to ask for a two-term presidency. I was voted out," Ople said.

Language, intent clear

Nachura said the language and intention of Article 7, Section 4 of the 1987 Constitution was very clear that a former president, or a vice president who succeeded and served the presidency for more than four years is not eligible for the same position at any time.

Nachura quotes the pertinent provisions of the Charter: "The President shall not be eligible for any reelection." And 'No person who has succeeded as president and who has served as such for more than four years shall not be qualified to serve the same office at any time."

Nachura said that if Ramos should run again in 2004, or one presidential term after his own, that would constitute reelection that is forbidden in the fundamental law of the land.

"As far as I'm concerned, there is really no gray area because the intention of the Constitution is very clear. There is no reelection for a former president," Nachura told the INQUIRER by phone.

This would be true, he said, if a vice president becomes president and serves the same post for more than four years.

"So if someone who merely succeeded the position and served it for five years is not eligible for reelection, what more for someone who was elected president?" Nachura said.

"The intention of the law is very, very clear. I have no doubt about its clarity," Nachura added.

Safeguard

He said the constitutional ban on presidential reelection was placed as a safeguard against a repeat of the Marcos dictatorship. The 1987 Constitution contained provisions chiefly to undo the harm done on the country's democracy during the Marcos regime.

Nachura said Ms Macapagal would still be eligible to run for president in 2004 because by that time she would have served less than four years.

Thus, he said, it would be unfair to say the President would benefit from a clarification of Ramos' intentions and the law because she is "clearly eligible" to run for a full-term in 2004.

Ms Macapagal, as Vice President, assumed the presidency on Jan. 20, 2001 after Estrada was ousted in the Edsa II people power revolt.

She has been coy about her plans for 2004 but even her own allies believe she has been focused in that direction.

Ramos' rumored bid for another term in 2004 is being seen as a threat to the incumbent President.

Nachura said Ramos could only claim a "gray area" in the sense that there is as yet no specific declaration from the high court.

But he said this is not really a gray area because the Constitution is clear.

However, he said, any clarification with the high court could only be done when an "actual case or controversy" arises.

But Nachura said he believes that Ramos is not running again.

'Wet dreams'

But to the Sanlakas militant group, Ramos "is not alone in these wet dreams. Gloria is also having her own preparations for 2004. Whatever FVR sees as gray, Gloria sees gold for 2004. If for FVR his second coming has a slim chance, for Gloria, her reelection is a must to be won. Their wet dreams are both driven by selfish political ambitions."

Sanlakas also said in a press statement that next year is the starting point for 2004: "for fund raising, horse-trading and getting as many *pogi* points." ***With a report from Cynthia Balana***

To temper temper GMA counts to 30

(From page A1)

be counting up to 30 to keep her infamous temper in check.

Ms Macapagal admitted she is "*mataray* (quick-tempered)." She made it her New Year's resolution to be less so in public and in private.

In her year-end "Ulat sa Bayan" yesterday *(Story on Page A2)* the President said she has made plans to help her keep her resolve.

"*Una sa lahat ay nagdarasal ako para sa grasya. Tapos noon sisikapin kong mag-count to 30 bago puputok ang butsi* (First of all, I will pray for grace. Then I will try to count up to 30 before I blow my top)," she said.

But even before the "Ulat" began, already her temper got the better of her. A taped introduction to her economic report had mixed up the data.

Her publicist Dante Ang and Press Undersecretary for Broadcast Manuel Sanchez immediately apologized for the gaffe.

The mistake involved the mislabeling of a quarterly growth report.

"The country achieved a 3.1 growth in gross domestic product for the first quarter, not the third quarter," Ms Macapagal lashed out.

She also made plans how to tackle reporters asking about controversial topics.

Her solution? She will keep her reply short and go on to another related topic.

"*Doon sa mga reporters na nagtatanong ng mga tanong na maintriga, sasagutin ko lang siguro siya ng one sentence at pupunta na ako doon sa gusto kong ipahayag* (To reporters who ask loaded questions, I will just answer with one sentence and I'll go to the topic I want to discuss)," she said.

In several instances in the past, Ms Macapagal blew her top during press conferences when asked about topics she did not care about.

The last time was in October when a reporter asked her about the latest coup rumors.

Nur doesn't want to be sent home

(From page A1)

send him back," Tarhata Misuari was quoted as saying by the Malaysian news agency, Bernama, following the two-hour visit at a Kuala Lumpur police station.

She was the first outsider to see Misuari since he was arrested on Nov. 24 when he arrived by boat on a beach in Malaysia's Sabah state fleeing a faltering uprising he had ignited.

The failed uprising, which claimed 100 lives, was a futile attempt to derail elections that ended his five-year reign as ARMM governor. The Philippine government has charged him with rebellion, which could bring a 20-year prison sentence.

Misuari has been held at a secret location since his capture to prevent supporters from trying to free him. It was unclear whether he was being held at the police station or was brought there only for the meeting with his wife and their three children.

'A bit thin'

"My husband looked healthy, although a bit thin," Tarhata was quoted as saying. "He was treated very well by the Malaysian authorities."

Tarhata, 27, said Misuari, 60, had lost some weight but he was alert and strong. "We thank Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad for his kindness," she said.

"We are so happy. We met for some two hours. He is alive and well," Tarhata said. "The children immediately embraced their father."

Tarhata said that at least four policemen were present during the meeting. "It was in an office. I think it was in Bukit Aman, the police headquarters," she said.

Tarhata said that she would remain in Malaysia until a decision on Misuari's application for asylum from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees was known.

She has also applied for UNHCR protection for herself and her children, saying their lives would be in danger if they returned to the Philippines.

US asylum?

Elly Pamatong, a US-based lawyer who claims to represent Misuari, said that Misuari has indicated that he wants to seek asylum and did not want to be deported to the Philippines.

"Misuari feels that his faith lies in the hands of Mahathir. He wants asylum," he said.

Pamatong, who was not allowed to meet Misuari, said he may file a petition in the Malaysian courts to seek his freedom.

Pamatong said that there were no plans for a future family meeting, but called on Misuari's six children from other marriages to be allowed to visit him.

Pamatong said the renegade governor told his wife that he hoped Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad would allow the family to seek political asylum abroad.

"He prefers to go to America," Pamatong told The Associated Press.

On Wednesday Tarhata said she had not heard from her husband for a month and feared he may have died while being held by Malaysian authorities.

Misuari, 60, was arrested on Nov. 24 off an island in Malaysia's Sabah state after launching a short-lived rebellion in Jolo.

KL disillusioned

Predominantly Muslim Malaysia long supported Misuari, but has grown closer to the Philippines on security issues in recent years and became disillusioned over what was seen as his corrupt and incompetent leadership after he became governor.

President Macapagal-Arroyo last week rejected an appeal from the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) for Misuari to be given sanctuary in a third country and instead vowed to put him on trial for rebellion.

Misuari is the former leader of the Muslim separatist group, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), which is recognized by the world Islamic body.

Malaysia provided sanctuary to the MNLF, which pushed for an independent Muslim homeland in the predominantly Catholic Philippines, in the 1970s and '80s.

Misuari became governor under a 1996 peace agreement to end decades of civil war between the MNLF and the Philippine government. ***Reports from AP and AFP***

Pinoys will still have US jobs–labor exec

By Blanche S. Rivera

DESPITE the economic downturn in the United States, Filipinos working there should not fear the job axe.

The assurance was made by labor attaché Helen Custodio of the Philippine Overseas Labor Office in Washington DC.

Custodio was in Manila recently to attend the Labor Attachés' Conference.

Custodio assured Filipinos the massive job retrenchments in the United States would not affect Pinoys working there.

She said the more than two million Filipinos across the US were not concentrated in the tourism and aviation industries, the two sectors hardest hit by the massive downturn in the American economy.

Custodio said job opportunities for Filipinos could even expand as US studies showed a need for some 10 million teachers all over the country in the next ten years.

She said American educators were retiring, while those who are currently in the service are leaving the cities because of heightened security concerns.

"Filipinos have a strong competitive edge because we speak good English and we are computer literate," Custodio said in an interview.

She said the Philippine Overseas Labor Office is working on a certification system for teaching posts because different states have different requirements and exams.

Custodio also noted that the US information technology sector, which employs many Filipinos, was not affected too much by the aftermath of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in New York and Virginia.

She said Filipino IT workers were very flexible and were in demand among IT firms in the United States.

Money remitted by ex-patriates in the US account for 68 percent of the total $8 billion remitted annually by Filipinos working overseas, a big chunk of the country's earnings.

"We feel there's no drop in demand for professional workers in America. Nurses and teachers will continue to go there with secure jobs," Custodio said.

Lawmakers defiant on 'laundering' law

By Cynthia D. Balana and Christine Avendaño

LEGISLATORS yesterday rejected making amendments to the Anti-Money Laundering Law to satisfy the Financial Action Task Force which reportedly deemed the measure insufficient.

Misamis Oriental Rep. Oscar Moreno said there was no need to amend the new law to correct the deficiencies perceived by the Paris-based FATF.

Sen. Joker Arroyo said if there were concerns about the three-month-old law, the remedy was not for Congress to be "stampeded" into amending it but for monetary and finance officials to direct a diplomatic offensive at the FATF.

The Philippines should not be unduly worried over "unverified misgivings" of the FATF over the law, Arroyo said.

"The law is good and addressed precisely the 40 recommendations of the FTAF," he added.

Arroyo said the FATF concern over the P4 million threshold trigger for banks to report deposits for being too high was unfounded.

He explained that the amount did not refer to a single transaction but to a series or combination of transactions within five consecutive days or a pattern of unusually large and complex transactions amounting to P4 million.

In Japan, he said, the threshold trigger was $300,000, or P15 million, while in Hong Kong it was unlimited.

Arroyo said a diplomatic offensive was needed to determine why the Philippines was being singled out by the FATF in refusing to accept the law and remove the country from its blacklist of uncooperative countries.

Opposition Sen. Edgardo Angara said amending the law would further hurt the country's banking system and make a mockery of the Bank Secrecy Law.

He said the new law's provisions were already working against banks, which have been struggling to stay afloat in the face of nervous depositors.

"The present law is an acceptable compromise," said Angara who helped shape the final version of the law.

"It provides a check against money launderers and gives some sort of protection to the banking system by respecting the Bank Secrecy Law," he said.

The FATF reportedly found the P4 million-threshold trigger "too high," saying it could be used as a loophole by those seeking to launder the proceeds of illegal activities.

Angara maintained that the law had adequate safeguards against the easy laundering of dirty money into the banking system.

Opposition Sen. Blas Ople said the FATF's action showed "unmitigated bigotry and arrogance . . . of faceless bureaucrats from the developed countries."

Ople said the law constituted the country's honest and voluntary response to an appeal from the international community and a benchmark of the country's high sense of international responsibility.

He stressed that the FATF was not an international court vested with legal enforcement powers, but merely an ad hoc organization of vested interests.

"It is not the Philippines but the United States and Switzerland which are the most notorious money laundering centers. This is a historical fact," he said.

Moreno, a member of the congressional oversight committee reviewing the implementing rules and regulations of the new law, said the FATF's concerns can be addressed by the country's basket of laws, statutes, jurisprudence and administrative regulations relating to the fight against money laundering.

He said government should explain the country's legal structure to the FATF "because you should expect they (FATF) are not familiar with our laws."

He said compliance with the FATF requirements should not be confined only to the anti-money laundering law "because we have other laws that are relevant."

He noted, for instance, that the Bangko Sentral has the power to regulate banks.

Moreno believes that the P4 million-threshold trigger should not be made the basis for the FATF's not accepting the new law.

He said the country has already taken the steps to relax the provisions of the Bank Secrecy Law.

For it to set a lower threshold trigger would mean a greater administrative burden for the banks and the government, he said.

But Moreno said the government should not only aim to convince the FATF of its anti-money laundering measures but also of its capability and political will to implement them.

He said the difficulties experienced in getting the anti-money laundering bill passed, and the resistance put up against it, were "indicative of the ills of our country."

If there is good governance, there is no need for an anti-money laundering law because the country already has measures in place, Moreno said.

'Nene' chides 'Kiko' for clearing 'Compañero'

By Rocky Nazareno

SENATE minority leader Aquilino "Nene" Pimentel Jr. yesterday assailed the decision of ethics committee chair Sen. Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan to release a report clearing Sen. Renato 'Compañero' Cayetano of wrongdoing in the Best World Resources stock purchase controversy.

In a press statement, Pimentel chided Pangilinan for rejecting his request for the committee to summon broadcaster Jay Sonza and Cayetano himself before it wrapped up its investigation.

Pimentel said the decision to clear Cayetano was "premature" and smacked of a coverup "which in the long run would backfire on Cayetano."

"If they do not want to hear the additional witnesses, that would be the conclusion of the people," Pimentel said.

Pimentel said Pangilinan had "no plausible reason" to decline his request to have Sonza testify.

He underscored the importance of Sonza's testimony. The broadcaster is said to have conducted a live broadcast interview of BW Resources chair Dante Tan, who had sold the BW shares to Cayetano.

Pangilinan countered that the minority had four-and-a-half months to produce the witnesses and evidence needed to pin Cayetano but failed to do so.

"Why did (the minority) wait until the report was being circulated for signing before asking the committee to have Cayetano explain?" said Pangilinan in a statement sent to the INQUIRER through text.

Pangilinan added that if Pimentel and the other minority senators disagreed with the findings of the committee, "they should file a dissenting opinion."

"If they have evidence, we can reopen the case. But until then, the case cannot remain hanging," Pangilinan said.

He noted that the complainants did not even get a deposition from Tan who was a vital witness as he was alleged to have sold the shares to Cayetano.

"Remember that the accuser has the burden of proof. The minority could not even produce a deposition from Tan," Pangilinan said.

The only other vital witness that the complainants produced, broker Raul de Castro, "even cleared Cayetano," said Pangilinan.

"The decision (to clear Cayetano) was based on the law and the evidence (presented)," Pangilinan said.

The committee released to media last week a copy of its report clearing Cayetano of any wrongdoing in the BW insider stock trading scandal.

The report concluded that complainants Jesus Crispin Remulla and Philippine Movement Against Poverty spokesperson Ronald Lumbao were not able to present sufficient evidence to prove that Cayetano had failed to disclose that he traded in BW shares while the probe into the alleged insider trading was being conducted.

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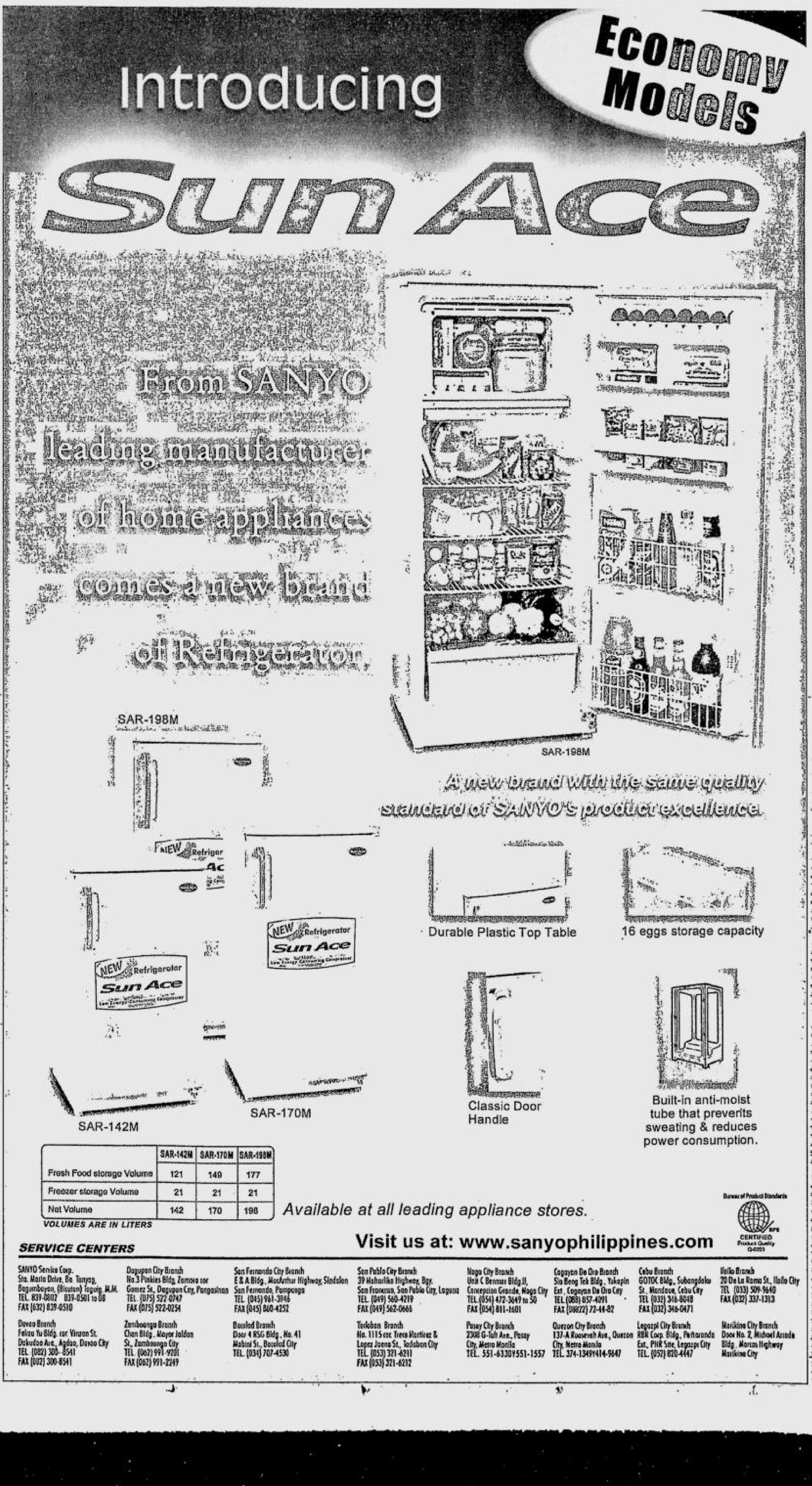
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OPINION

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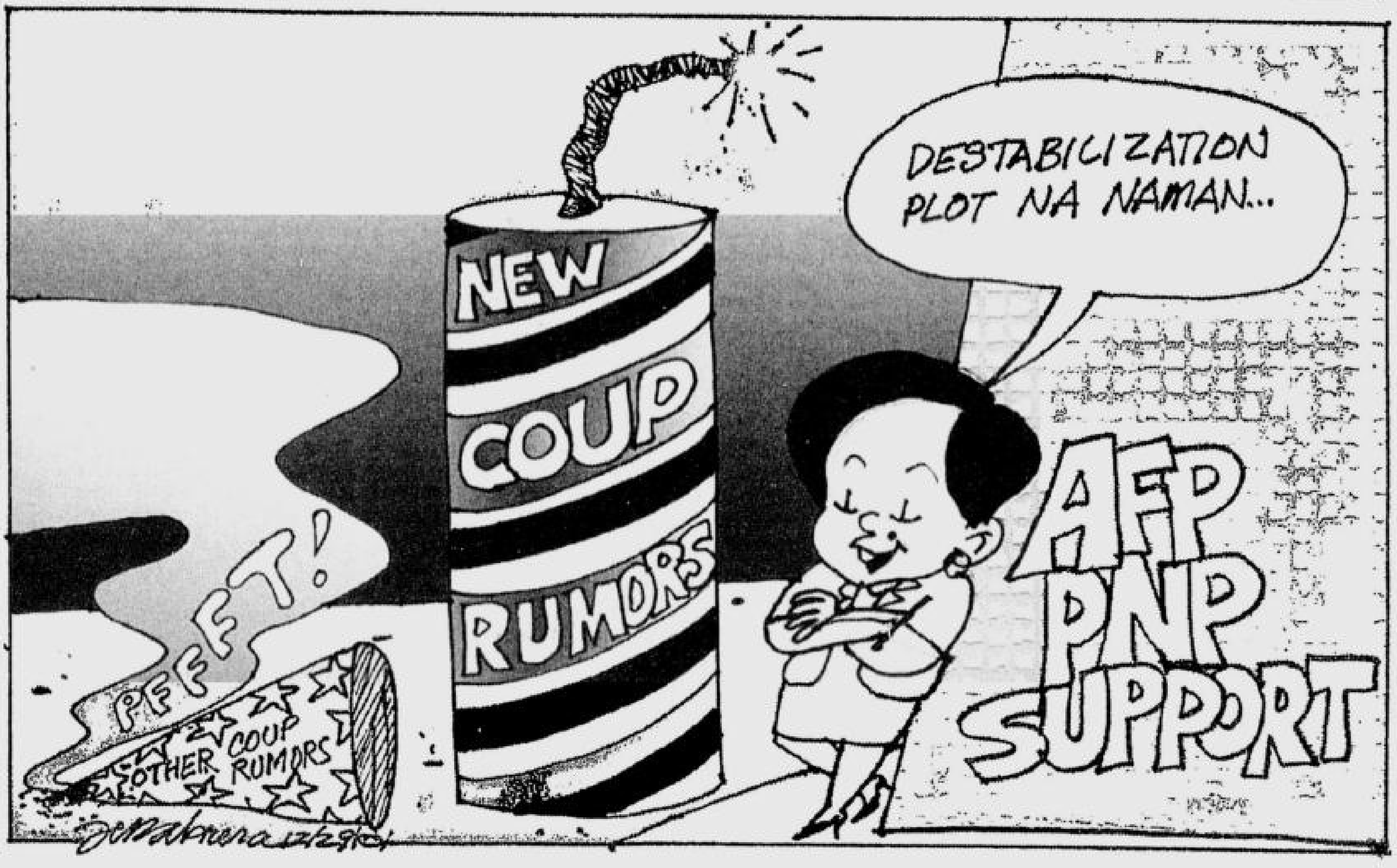

Spoiled brats

EDITORIAL

EVEN in the worst of times, Filipino lawmakers will find some reasons to be generous and give gifts during the Christmas season—especially to themselves. So it wasn't exactly surprising that three days before Christmas, our senators and congressmen carved the biggest slice of pork ever from the budget of the national government for 2002.

The lawmakers' addiction to pork barrel is no longer news, of course. Every year they always set aside billions for projects that they themselves will identify, despite the many exposés on the waste and outright misappropriation of public funds associated with the practice. What makes this year's pork barrel different is that it sets a new record for greed.

In the last few years, the congressmen seemed satisfied with having P50 million each for their favorite projects and senators settled for about double that amount. In fact, that was what the House of Representatives had approved when it sent to the Senate the budget bill, which included a P3.4-billion allocation for the congressional pork barrel.

But in the Senate, the finance committee chair, Sen. John Osmeña, insisted that cuts should be made, especially on the P10-billion allocation for the Armed Forces Modernization Program. He said the AFP's shopping list was all wrong with its bias for expensive hardware like battle ships when what the soldiers needed were small arms, radios, transport equipment and the like. The bicameral conference committee was easily persuaded to make the cut in the military budget, but its members also agreed not to take out a single centavo from the P780.8-billion budget proposed by Malacañang.

Now they had a problem: What will they do with the extra P5 billion they had in their hands? Easy. Put an extra P1 billion in the hands of the Philippine National Police so that it can hire more policemen, give back P500 million to the AFP to hire more soldiers and militiamen, give the Commission on Elections P200 million so that it can hold the long-delayed barangay elections, add P260 million to the budget of the Department of Education, throw an extra P5 million to the Office of the President, but keep the bulk of money amounting to P2.3 billion.

After such a dazzling display of budgetary wizardry, Congress found itself with a total of P5.7 billion in pork, with every congressman getting at least P65 million and each senator P200 million.

It was as if the members of Congress lived in a completely different world where the government was swimming in cash. But the reality is that the Macapagal administration is staring at a P145-billion budget deficit for the year that is about to end, and it is hoping that the shortfall can be kept at P130 billion next year. And that goal can be only achieved with rigid fiscal discipline, according to Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin.

But what discipline is the administration talking about? The administration can't be so naïve as to be unaware of the purely political purposes for which the pork barrel is used and the graft and corruption that attends its disbursement. And yet when legislators, behaving like spoiled brats, gifted themselves with a P5.7-billion pork barrel, it responded like a doting grandfather, with a knowing smile and a wink.

Now that Congress has tested the limit of tolerance for pork of the Macapagal administration and found it non-existent, the Filipino people can only watch helplessly as their lawmakers vote for themselves bigger and bigger amounts of pork in the coming years. What amount will satisfy them next year? And the next? How much is enough?

If the administration doesn't have the answer, Filipino voters should give it in the next elections.

Chaos rules

FOREIGN COMMENT

AT THE END of this year, there is no sign of a new world order emerging, as George Bush senior hoped it would after the Gulf War.

For now, chaos rules. Whether the power of the United States is sufficient to bring this chaos back under control, remains uncertain after the overthrow of the Taliban.

If it can't, 2001 could also mark the decline of American culture. Freeing the world permanently of terror is, because it's unachievable, a delusion that could mean ever more war and new chaos.

Even when Osama bin Laden is in the hands of the United States, dead or alive, that won't mean the end of armed conflicts. The conflict in the Mideast threatens to escalate further because Washington is hesitating to put its foot down. The spreading violence is bringing extreme danger to the whole region and threatens important western interests.

Berliner Zeitung (Berlin)

Rejoinder to Rene

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

RENE Saguisag sent me a copy of a pleading titled "Reply to Opposition" that he filed recently with the Sandiganbayan in connection with the motion of accused Joseph Estrada for permission to go abroad for medical reasons. It made my day because it was partly a reply to me although I'm not a party to the proceedings.

In his covering letter, Rene says that my "trenchant column of two Sundays ago (PDI, 12/2/01) was used by the prosecution seeking that scorn be heaped on the Erap defense panel for reasons I cannot be certain of." He therefore zeroed in on my views, as if I were the enemy, to vicariously hit the prosecution by ricochet.

He had the grace, though, to condole with me and my son Caloy on the passing of my daughter-in-law Maybelle. I also thank him for the many compliments he paid this friendly foe in the course of his spirited arguments for Erap.

He begins his pleading with a passage from my *ponencia* in Sanchez v. Demetriou, 227 SCRA 627, where I warned that although the petitioner has already been convicted by many outraged persons of the crimes imputed to him, he was still entitled to the protection of the Bill of Rights and the constitutional presumption of innocence.

He says he likes this quote from me "as the academic jurist, not the political polemicist." He then proceeds to criticize me and points out, as if revealing a startling discovery, that—

"Justice Cruz, a dear friend and idol whose books we use in our classes in political and constitutional law, has not attended a single hearing. He has not heard a single witness. His anti-Erap stance has sadly been evident from the start. He has tried and convicted the accused by publicity, conveniently forgetting the ringing words we quoted from him above, and conditions the minds of his readers to accept only his prejudgments."

"Why not comport himself as a Justice still and wait till all the evidence is in?"

Because, dear Rene, I am no longer "a Justice still" but a justice no more except in name or title. Now I am only an ordinary private citizen, not even a practicing lawyer like you with a former President of the Philippines as a client. I cannot try Estrada, much less can I convict him in a court of law. But I can do these things as a private citizen before the court of public opinion, where everyone is a judge.

You know as well as your students should that the Bill of Rights is a guaranty against governmental arbitrariness, not the acts of private individuals. Congress cannot pass *ex post facto* laws, impair the obligation of contracts, or curtail religious freedom. In criminal cases, it is the court that cannot make prejudgments in violation of due process or the constitutional presumption of innocence. These restrictions are not applicable to private individuals like you and me.

Private citizens have more leeway in the discussion of public affairs. They are protected by the freedom of expression guaranteed by the Constitution. They have the right to make prejudgments, if you will, based on their own understanding of a case or of the accused or even evidence not judicially admissible. They are laymen, not judges. They have the right to express their own opinions, correct or not, for evaluation in what has aptly been called "the competition of the market."

Columnists like me are opinion makers. We are not supposed to straddle the fence on public issues. Anything that "touches the heart of the existing order" is a valid topic for discussion on the editorial page. The citizenry in general, and less so, the media, is not required to keep a respectful silence while a case is before the courts, which in our country take years and even decades to decide. The people are entitled to know what's happening in the Estrada cases, as in other cases, including the filing of trivial motions.

You flatter me when you say that my column "conditions the minds of (my) readers to accept only (my) prejudgments." At the same time, you belittle the intelligence of those readers who weigh my opinions against other opinions, concurring or dissenting according to their own lights. Readers are not tractable and gullible "dumb driven cattle" who will automatically believe what they read. Despite your misgivings, they can and do think for themselves and accept or reject my views—and also yours for that matter—as they see fit.

When you speak outside the Sandiganbayan and argue that Joseph Estrada is innocent, are you not also conditioning the minds of your audience to your prejudgment? In fact, you are more influential than I am, given your former status as a senator and your high visibility as a defense counsel of various prominent persons. Speaking as an ordinary involved citizen in radio or television interviews, you attack the prosecution and defend Estrada. Why can't I, in a similar but humbler capacity, support the prosecution and attack Estrada?

In the free society, private citizens—and especially opinion makers—have a right to comment for or against a public issue because, as Justice Holmes would put it, "the ultimate good desired is best reached by a free trade in ideas." My purpose in writing on such matters is to stimulate the thinking of the people on an issue in which they should be actively interested as members of the body politic. We have no need for an apathetic citizenry.

The Estrada case is one such subject. Rene would suppress my views because they are likely to condition the minds of the people against his client, but he ignores his extra-judicial efforts, much more effective than mine, to condition their minds in favor of Erap. He may say he knows more about the case than I do but how can he compare when he does not even know how much of it I do know? He seems to have forgotten that, again to cite Holmes, freedom of expression exists not only for the thought that agrees with us but also for the thought that we detest.

Enjoy the holidays, Rene, my cherished friend. And have a successful career except as Erap's counsel.

My own list of awards

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

JUST about everyone is giving out awards at this time of the year, so I figure I might as well do the same. I even have a title, which is definitely not original, for my awards: Applause and Applesauce. I hope to give out these awards every year starting with 10 in all for this year (there may be less or more in any given year).

I make no claims that there has been any attempt on my part to judge a number of candidates against a set of conventional and published criteria. Frankly, I would doubt the word of anyone who claims to go through such a painstaking process for something that will be published only in his or her column.

Rather, what I have done is to either think of certain categories and search my mind for likely candidates (comparing "qualifications" if there are more than one); or, I must admit, to think of a category that would fit a person that has been prominent in the news and then describe his or her "accomplishments."

It is thus entirely possible that I have missed out completely on people who would have been a better choice if I had only thought of them in the first place. So that if anyone thinks that he/she was better qualified for any of the categories described below, they can take comfort in the fact that it was due to a serious oversight on my part.

A final caveat: President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has been arbitrarily considered a *nolo contendere*—that is to say, she was not considered at all for any of the awards where she would automatically come to mind. To make the competition less one-sided. So here goes:

Person of the Year: Time Magazine isn't the only one who can give out this award. And the one who wins, no other person came close, actually, is Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. If the award were accompanied by a citation, this would advert to Davide's absolute impartiality during the impeachment trial, the dignity with which he comported himself at that trial, and the speed with which he led the Supreme Court into settling the issue of the constitutionality of the Macapagal takeover. At least equally important is his marked success in increasing the case disposition rate of the Supreme Court and in weeding out corruption in the judiciary. If he continues to accomplish significant improvements in either of these within his tenure at the Supreme Court, his place in Philippine history is assured.

Cabinet Secretary of the Year: I have no complaint against most of the Cabinet members, who seem to be hardworking, competent and ego-less. But three in particular stand out, all being part of the economic management team, which was faced with a truly difficult task: Budget Secretary Emy Boncodin, Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Dante Canlas and Finance Secretary Lito Camacho. It was a close race, but Boncodin won by a nose—mainly because she not only was able to keep this year's deficit within target, but managed to steer next year's budget through Congress while still keeping the most amicable of relations with the legislators (with no horse-trading, mind).

NGO of the Year: No doubt about it, CODE-NGO or the Caucus of Development NGOs takes the prize—because of that brilliant financial coup that it pulled through which makes it the most financially well-endowed development NGO in the Philippines, and possibly in the world. And make no mistake about it: after interviewing the major players in the financial transaction, I am convinced that there was no scam or hanky-panky involved, no loss of government revenue, no government expenditure without appropriation, as has been charged or implied by various sectors inflicted with a serious case of crab mentality. In fact, I would have given its chair, Marissa Reyes, an award as Woman of the Year or Dealmaker of the Year, had she tendered her irrevocable resignation from the organization when her brother was appointed finance secretary. I will write about this at greater length in my next column, but suffice it to say at this time that (1) she did resign, but it was not accepted and (2) the needed government approvals were secured before her brother became finance secretary.

Businessman of the Year: Again, no contest: Danding Cojuangco, for putting over the $540-million Kirin deal, and getting the latter, reportedly, to sign a voting trust agreement that obligates it to vote with Cojuangco in the San Miguel board for the next five years. Another coup. The government has its work cut out to either kick Cojuangco out of San Miguel, or of nullifying that voting trust agreement, or both.

Scapegoat of the Year: This award, also called the Whipping Boy award, has to go to presidential spouse Mike Arroyo. While his name has gotten dragged through the mud (PCSO, the Telecom deal) with great alacrity, nobody bothers to apologize to him for doing so when it is found out that there is no basis for the charges leveled against him. It seems his only fault so far is that he is married to the President.

Whoops. No more space to discuss the Fibber of the Year, the Squid of the Year, the Organization of the Year, the Best Performing Congressman and the Rookie Senator of the Year. Names without explanation will have to suffice for the nonce. For Fibber, it is a dead heat between Medel, Marcelo and Mawanay. For Organization, the Abu Sayyaf. Squid is awarded to Panfilo Lacson. Best Congressman is a tie between Rolando Andaya Jr. and Oscar Moreno. And Ralph Recto gets the prize for Rookie Senator.

Happy New Year.

Devoid of ambition, JDV is now everyone's friend

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

IN EVERY political clime, he who even hints of a presidential ambition gets to reap the brickbats, attracting attacks like a lightning rod. Recall that President Macapagal's political enemies are accusing her of the 2004 mentality, trying to force her to reveal her cards this early on the coming electoral contest. Right now former President Ramos is being hit, as he plays coy about reports that he's again lusting for the top post. FVR says he's happy about playing elder statesman and "*kuya*" only, but on the other hand, he insists that the constitutional prohibition on ex-presidents running again is a gray area and needs to be "tested." Sen. Rodolfo Biazon says he doesn't believe FVR's disavowal and that his "body language" bears watching. To which FVR snaps, "Biazon is insecure."

* * *

By contrast, Jose de Venecia, the man who lost by a wallop to Joseph Estrada in 1998, has categorically disavowed any higher ambitions and claims he's just happy to make his mark as Speaker of the House. As such he has become everyone's friend and his popularity seems at an all-time high. Ideas come out of his head and are quickly adopted by the administration, such as the rent-to-own scheme in housing and the creation of a vehicle for banks to dispose of their non-performing assets. The Speaker seems to have become President Macapagal's closest ally, and she shows it.

Last Christmas evening, GMA and the First Gentleman lingered around during JDV's advance 65th birthday celebration at his Dasmariñas Village home where some 700 people, including minority members of Congress, had turned out to greet him. Among the opposition members who came were Senator Biazon, Zamboanga Mayor Caling Lobregat and Iloilo Rep. Rolex Suplico. Before Congress adjourned for the holidays opposition members Ronaldo Zamora and Agapito Aquino spoke out on the House floor to congratulate De Venecia for a productive chamber and wish him happy birthday.

* * *

But GMA's appearance at JDV's Dasmariñas place was not enough. The following day, she flew by chopper to Dagupan City to join De Venecia and wife Gina for lunch at the Matutina seafood restaurant in Dagupan, said to be GMA's favorite restaurant, before she hied off to Baguio to spend the Christmas break there with her family. The De Venecias flew to his province that morning to spend his actual birthday with his constituents, and it happened to be also Dagupan City Day; he capped that long day by crowning Miss Dagupan 2001 at the big dance where Iggy de Guzman, imported from Manila, provided the music for the dance-loving Dagupeños. This columnist later showed up at JDV's birthday dinner at his Dagupan residence, and I kidded him about how very *malakas* he has become with the President. "Imagine joining you in two birthday celebrations," I ribbed him, and he smiled broadly, quipping, "*Masyadong malakas.*"

Actually, this is not surprising, for now that he has become devoid of any higher ambition, De Venecia is now able to concentrate on turning out ideas from his very creative mind to help GMA, beginning with his efforts to reach out to the NDF. Later, at a seafood picnic at his fishpond in the Watac swamps of Bonoan, where his family has for generations raised the famous thick-bellied bangus that it is noted for, I remarked to JDV that there has not been a major scandal in the House to mar his speakership. So far so good, he agreed, knocking on wood for good measure.

* * *

But the holiday mood and euphoria that had pervaded JDV's birthday celebration last Dec. 26 quickly turned to gloom the following morning. A call came from Los Angeles that Marissa Hernandez, JDV's longtime girl Friday, who handled his 1998 and 2001 campaigns and arranges all his TV and radio appearances as well as his wife Gina's own projects, had died of head concussion on the LA freeway the day before. Marissa had asked to be allowed to join her children in the United States a few days before Christmas, and despite the big celebration of JDV's birthday, Gina didn't have the heart to ask her to postpone her departure. On Dec. 26, as her boss celebrated his birthday in Dagupan, she drove out early that morning with her daughter and son-in-law, eager to capitalize on the morning-after-Christmas shopping when shops slashed prices by incredible margins. Marissa sat in the back without a belt and when their car was hit by another car and spun around, she was thrown out; the two people in front, who were belted, escaped without a scratch—another tragic episode to dramatize the importance of seat belts.

* * *

Gina de Venecia was inconsolable, for Marissa, a classmate of her elder sister Marichu Maceda at Assumption Convent, had been a loyal friend and constant companion to her. The De Venecias' son, Chris, also wept unashamedly, for Marissa played mom to him and his sister KC whenever their parents would travel abroad. The Speaker, consoling his wife, told her that God had chosen to call their friend already. "It shows us all how life is, fragile as a thread," he mused later at breakfast. Gina flew last night to LA to bid final farewell to her friend, who will be buried there. Her consolation is that on Christmas Day Marissa texted her the message: "I hope your Christmas was as happy as mine here." At least, said Gina, Marissa died with Christmas in her heart.

Many of us in the media got to befriend Marissa during the 1998 campaign, and will miss her cheerful personality, ever ready to help anyone in need.

* * *

I joined the Speaker and his family at Mass that morning at the Shrine of Our Lady of Manaoag, whom JDV likes to refer to as "my constituent." Later they motored to the palace of Archbishop Oscar V. Cruz, D.D. in Dagupan City, to pay their respects. It was the first time I had met Archbishop Cruz, though I had heard a lot about him especially when he was the outspoken president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines. He is regarded as one of the more intellectual bishops around.

This time the prelate has issued a warning to Mayor Benjie Lim and the city council that he would oppose the plan to enforce the ordinance favoring bingo in Dagupan City. The prelate lamented that it seemed not enough that the Dagupeños are already highly endangered by the drug menace. The city council's intention to add another form of gambling to lotto and the casinos will provide yet another occasion "to waste (the people's) little money, to steal their time, to promote a chance mentality." From the way he sounds, Cruz seems dead serious about opposing the council on this score.

'Yamashita' and 'Bagong Buwan'

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

AT THE END of "Yamashita: The Tiger's Treasure," we're told that as a result of "confiscating" the fabled Yamashita loot from a ruthless Japanese treasure hunter, the Philippines managed to dig itself out of the economic rut. As the street sign for "Edsa" is replaced by a sign with the name of "Lolo Carmelo," the lone survivor of the gang of conscripts who were killed so that the location of the treasure would remain a secret, we're told that because of the consequent influx of foreign investments, the peso-dollar exchange rate had fallen to P4=$1.

"Ahh, it's a fantasy movie," the hubby and my two children quipped, practically in the same breath. So who would've thought this much-vaunted action/adventure movie by noted director Chito Rono would end up in the same realm as "Harry Potter?"

As local action/adventure movies go, "Yamashita" is a relatively slick product. Press reports highlight the sums spent on the special effects and production design, and they do show in the movie. The invasion scenes are pulled off with a semblance of authenticity, and the plot moves briskly while managing to build up suspense.

But moviegoers looking for scope and vision to match the pyrotechnics and elaborate sets are in for a disappointment. The movie focuses on the efforts to recover the Yamashita treasure of Lolo Carmelo, played by Armando Goyena in a late "comeback" effort after decades away from the limelight (except as patriarch to the Revilla dynasty of local show biz and pulchritude). Why does he decide to break five decades of silence? Ostensibly, it is to help his son with his financial difficulties, though he also seeks to find closure on a personal tragedy. The road to recovering the treasure, though, is strewn with obstacles thrown up by competing treasure hunters, including the son of the fisherman who had rescued Carmelo.

* * *

"YAMASHITA" switches back and forth between Carmelo's past and present. The young Carmelo is played by Carlo Muñoz, better known as "Billy" in the PLDT commercials, and he's largely wasted in the role. All he's required to do is react to events, and it's difficult, just judging from his facial expressions, to determine what he's reacting to. He wears the same "deer caught in the headlights" expression regardless of whether he's seeing his younger brother among the conscripts and learning about the death of his father, or seeing a cave lined with gold bars and golden Buddhas.

We did have one "gotcha!" moment in the movie. As Carmelo lies in his cot after his rescue, a nurse approaches him and asks his name. Before Carmelo can reply, the fisherman/rescuer approaches and the nurse introduces him to "Carmelo," even if she hasn't yet learned his name.

Still, "Yamashita" made for good entertainment. The plot line is relatively tight and, save for the P4-$1 twist, falls well within the realm of the possible. In terms of meaning and significance, though, it doesn't seem to have had any loftier ambitions beyond being a slick commercial product. Which brings me to the fact that it was named the "best film" in the recent MMFF awards night. It's well-made, but I think the honor should have fallen to a film with greater aspirations and impact on the nation's life.

* * *

AND that film is, undoubtedly, "Bagong Buwan," Marilou Diaz-Abaya's movie about Muslim civilians caught in the crossfire between the military and the MILF in the recent "all-out war" called by the Estrada administration in Central Mindanao.

While telling the story through the eyes and plight of a Muslim doctor, portrayed by "best actor" winner Cesar Montano, and his family as they seek sanctuary from the firefights, "Bagong Buwan" manages to enlarge its canvas. It examines as well the age-old enmity between Muslims and Christians in Mindanao, as well as the deep-rooted causes of the conflict that straddle not just religious differences, but also cultural and ethnic divisions as well as disputes over property and power.

At the same time, the movie manages to hold out possibilities for unity and understanding. This it does mainly through such characters as the young church worker who helps both Christians and Muslims caught in the conflict, and Dr. Ismail himself, who sees as his life's mission the healing of the sick and wounded regardless of their faith or loyalties.

I caught Diaz-Abaya on TV recently where she was asked if the events of Sept. 11 had not changed the context of her movie, which had been made before that day's tragedy. The director's reply was that she thought the movie was even more necessary than before the destruction of the Twin Towers, since by then Islam as a religion had become "demonized" by the acts of a few terrorists.

* * *

"BAGONG Buwan" certainly makes a case for understanding and appreciating Muslim Filipinos. The film portrays them not just as "normal" people, feeling the same strains of family differences and fears for the welfare of family members as Christians, but also as deeply religious and faith-filled. "Allah" falls from their lips frequently, and the admonition to submit to the will of the Almighty sets off echoes of Catholic religiosity.

The film is careful not to take sides in the conflict, though the MILF gets more than its fair share of celluloid time to claim its ascendancy as the representative of Filipino Muslim aspirations (as if the MNLF never existed). But even without making political statements, its effort to go beyond stereotypes and to individualize the Muslim community beyond the collective images of "Moros" is itself a deeply significant political act.

I have my quibbles with "Bagong Buwan's" merits as a film. There are too many polemics for comfort, for one. But this is one movie that indeed required courage to make, especially in these days of anti-Islamic sentiment. I agree with Montano. "Bagong Buwan" deserved the honor to be named the festival's best.

Year-end reflections

COMMENTARY

Natalia M.L.M. Morales

THE END of the year compels some soul-searching, individually as well as collectively. The individual is highly personal and squares with the ritualistic New Year's resolutions meant to be ignored largely, if not totally forgotten in the end. Perhaps a more useful exercise is to contribute to a larger soul-searching—whether of the nation's or of the bigger humanity.

As the family Christmas newsletter put it—the year 2001 was unforgettable. The third millennium begun quietly, with much promise but surreptitiously made a loud, violent bang for a lesson or two to mankind. Yes, we survived the Y2K scare in 2000 with all its hype. No one thought about the terrorist bug that finally caught the world in its grip. Documents and TV news later reveal that the world bodies like the UN Security Council and the US State Department have been preoccupied with resolutions and investigations related to terrorist bombings in embassies (mainly the United States) all over the world. The oft-quoted phrase of President Bush "to bring Osama bin Laden to justice and justice to Bin Laden" prominently appeared in a UN resolution in 1999 or thereabouts. In fact, the $25 million on Bin Laden's head offered by the United States and the global alliance is déjà vu. A similar but smaller price of $5 million was placed on the same head in 1999, according to the International Center for the Study of Terrorism. Clearly, these offers failed either because there were no takers or there was no chance to collect it in the first place, for Bin Laden proves elusive until now.

The US hegemony has suffered a backlash. The start of 2001 saw the United States concerned with its trademark monitor of democracy in the world—the security threat posed by the "hermit sovereign" in North Korea, the long-standing conflict and instability in the Middle East, US principled support for the self determination of the Palestinian people at times clashing with its traditional friendship with the Israelis, the calculated nurturing of the erstwhile enemy Russia now battling with Chechnyan rebels and other dissident forces. The Philippine People Power Revolt II in early January was met with less enthusiasm either because the world knows where the exercise will end again, or that Filipinos are now trusted with their own political destiny. Interestingly, a CNN report compared the terrorists in Afghanistan and the Philippines. This is due to the close personal ties of Abu Sayyaf leaders with Bin Laden (his brother-in-law had a Filipino wife). But the report also stated that in contrast to Afghanistan, the Philippines has a stable form of government. The fact that the point has to be made at all, can only mean that Philippine stability is not that obvious to the outside world.

Which brings me to the point that while US hegemony has democracy in its global agenda in disputed authoritarian regimes, it ends the year with the restoration of freedom in Afghanistan—sidelined for nearly 20 years after Afghan victory over the Soviets. Paradoxically, the Talibans whom the United States supported through the Pakistan Inter Services Intelligence, were forced out of their naïve yet notorious religious dictatorship. Afghanistan is now looking toward a freer country, surely within the US domain, at least in the short run. This can be as promising as it is volatile, judging from the past histories of both countries.

Undoubtedly, the US intervention in Afghan affairs is as accidental as the global impact of the Sept. 11 attacks. The Afghan theocratic regime was totally unprepared for the onslaught. The United States entered Afghanistan, with Pakistan's intercession, with Bin Laden as its target. The rightful ouster of the Talibans was an afterthought, if not a justified happenstance. The counterattack hopefully brings justice to the Afghan people, especially its women, but Bin Laden is nowhere in sight. Perhaps, divine justice wills freedom of the Afghans as a priority over the capture of Bin Laden and the al-Qaida demolition. The United States has made a statement, and the Talibans' unpreparedness conveys a message, too, of the need for cautious alliances of fledgling regimes. World politics has never been on such unequal, but enigmatic ground as this one.

For all the three months of US bombing and the efforts of global alliance to drive a wedge into terrorist attacks, it tells us that the enemy in this new millennium is not ideology, religion, advanced military technology or sophisticated strategy. The war against terror is actually a contest of wills—on one end is the US will to root out what it perceives as evil force that threatens people and their ways of life. On the other end is Bin Laden as the symbol of enigmatic resolve against perceived interlopers from the West. Reports of his alleged death, with no empirical backing so far, deepens the mystery of the man. The drama of democracy now begins in Afghanistan.

It may not be too far-fetched to say that Afghanistan now is in the same place where China was, in the throes of great revolutionary change, a century ago. The Boxers' Rebellion and Sun Yat Sen's nationalist crusade served as catalysts at that time. Now the flowering of China, with its industry, skills and productivity benefits the whole world. Its past is but a grim shadow flooded out by the brightness of its current economic performance.

For sure, the accidental emancipation of the Afghan people will be closely watched. Whether it will truly nurture the fruits of freedom and progress in the end is another test for human history to make.

Natalia M.L.M. Morales is professor of Political Science and International Studies at the University of the Philippines in Diliman.

Non-alcoholic me

"The piano has been drinking/not me..."
—Tom Waits

YOUNGBLOOD

Elen P. Farkas

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

ALCOHOL is not my best friend. And this time of merriment, I admit, I'm always the loser.

I was 8 years old the first time I tasted beer. I remember the night my father poured a small portion of San Miguel Beer in his glass; beside it was a plate of peanuts as his *pulutan*. The color in the glass was inviting. Its bubbles and foam readily caught my eye. The sound it created when he put the liquid into the crystal-clear former Nescafé glass was intriguing. And for a child, it was enticing. I wondered what its taste was compared to Coke, which my mother never bought. Hi-C or Cetrin was our standard drink. Coke and Pepsi were both no-nos.

As my father gulped the entire yellowish content of his glass, he glanced at me and knew I was curious.

"You want to try?" he asked.

"Can I?" My eyes were sparkling.

"Of course!" Father was smiling from ear to ear and he knew what would happen.

It only lasted for a second until I let the floor taste it too. The bitter liquid didn't even warm my mouth.

"What was that?" I demanded an answer. Immediately, I grabbed a handful of peanuts to vanish the unsavoury taste.

Since then I never liked the taste of beer. After that, I promised myself I would never, ever, touch it again. And I would avoid it as best as I could.

I was clean for 16 years. My college friends were as sober as me. No one experimented. No one tried. There were vague memories in between, during high school. But that was committed by my pimpley faced male classmates. Their reported flirtation with alcohol and drugs were the result of adolescent fears, hormonal changes and curiosity. And it increased my disgust for spirits. The smell that emanated from their small bodies, not yet fully men, turned me off. My parents were proud of their eldest daughter. I became a role model to my younger sister.

But fate started to make fun of me. The second firm I joined in was the prime example of hedonistic but reserved individuals. The job required us to be calm in times of pressure. I wouldn't say it was a curse because the company made a great impact on me as a person, a member of the working class and a Filipino. I met interesting people for whom smoking and spirits were best buddies. Some of them became my friends, others were just plain acquaintances.

On my 24th birthday, I was destined to taste Tequila and Margarita. It worried my mother, who was not used to seeing me drunk coming home from work. I couldn't forget her first question.

"Do you have a problem?" My mother was roused from sleep by my coming in and rushing to the sink. I reeked of Tequila. Plus the evidence of cigarette smoke that never left my clothes. She knew I was inside a smoky club. I shook my head, still feeling sick. I was still bent over the sink; in front of me were the morsels of food I had eaten while drinking the spirit.

And then I was kind of relieved. But it was not enough. I sat on a sofa and felt as if I were floating. This time it was my father who emerged from the room. Even though I didn't take a peek, I already knew what his face looked like.

"*Kung kailan ka tumanda saka ka pa naging ganyan.*" I didn't know what to say; it was partly due to the fact that I was slightly drunk. And besides, there was no point of arguing with him. I quickly went to my room and prepared to sleep. But sleep didn't come easily. I had to wait until I saw the signs of daylight.

When I woke up, I felt my head was heavy and there were blisters all over my body. They were itchy. I got worried. But I only drank two-and-a-half jiggers of Mexican cactus (agave), a.k.a., Tequila.

Again, I told myself I would never drink it again. But promises were meant to be broken. I still toiled around. There were more misses than hits. I finally decided that alcohol was really not meant for me. I started to decline my friends' offers to hang out. I became a party pooper, ordering iced tea instead of San Miguel Light (for my cholesterol-worrying friends) or the mean original one. I could say I was a social smoker, too. The long-time smokers among my friends could detect I never inhaled the smoke down to my lungs.

I started to wean myself from my circle of friends. Especially when I knew they would spend their off-hours going to a club, I began to plead excuses, real and imagined. They didn't believe me after that. Even if I told them the smell of alcohol completely sickened me. Even if I showed them my blisters.

"Ever heard of how to increase your alcohol tolerance?" One of them asked me. I didn't bother to search for it because I didn't have any intention to increase it, I was better off with my current situation.

It was not until I met my Austrian husband and lived with him. Austria is virtually a beer and wine country. Every province has its own *Brewerei* (brewery) and *Weingut* (vineyard), private or otherwise. More often than not, one can spot numerous beer and wine factories in just one place.

The locals can down three to five liters of beer and one-and-a-half liters of wine like I down one-liter of Coke in just one sitting. I always associate the need for alcohol to the weather just to give justice that alcohol-drinking is as natural as breathing in Vienna. A *Schnaps* (brandy) here, or a *Sturm* (fermented grape juice, but not yet wine) there. Or beer and wine all-year round don't hurt either.

"If ever you would be trapped in an island, what are the things you would bring?" It was a mental quiz posed by my professor in college. One of the things included on his enumerated what-to-bring list was a bottle of Vodka. I chose a plastic, wood and I don't know what else but never a Vodka. It's only in the end that my professor explained that Vodka is often used to keep the body immune from the cold temperature. I laughed at his suggestion. But my husband told me how the Russians are the complete winners when it comes to drinking Vodka. The Irish compete with the Austrians, and the English and Australians are catching up when it comes to beer-drinking contests.

Whenever my husband's friends invite us for a get-together, I always see everybody drinking beer. As for me you can find me happily drinking my apple juice. Everybody asks ("Don't you think *Apfelsaft* is boring already?") and everybody wonders ("You never hang out in the Philippines?"). And each time they ask me these questions I just say, "It's just not my thing. I feel safe in my carbonated apple juice." Then, everybody shuts up.

That sort of separates me from their world. Sometimes I get worried if I give them a negative impression. But what can I do? Anyway, my husband assured me that he accepts me for what I am and that I don't have to prove anything to anyone. And as always, that calms my ebbing self-esteem. I don't need a spirit to whisk me away; I only need to be myself. And, I believe, that's intoxicating enough.

Elen P. Farkas, 28, used to work as an editorial assistant in a publishing company and now lives in Vienna, Austria.

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LETTERS

Walking all the way with Jesus

THE INQUIRER'S editorial last Dec. 24 sang high praises to Jesus but, by calling into dispute the claim of His Divinity, it actually challenged His Godhood and therefore the truth of His teachings.

No founder of any of the world's great religions had ever claimed divineship, except Jesus who said that He was the Son of God and preached that He and the Father were one. You cannot have it both ways. If He were not the Third Person of God as He claimed to be, He would not be worthy of praise as He would be the greatest fraud who ever lived.

You cannot, as your editorial would suggest, "forget Christ's eschatology," that mankind has a final destiny with God, without obscuring his preachings on eternal life. You cannot "forget, if you will, Jesus' announcement of the coming of the Kingdom of God and His call to repentance" without emasculating His teachings on His return and the need to straighten our ways to prepare for His Kingdom.

His Sermon on the Mount, while it "will never be surpassed," was meant to give full force to the Ten Commandments with a new way of life, and not to replace the Father's commands. The editorial asked, what can be more radical than his exhortation to love one's enemies? True, yet more radical is His exhortation that unless we eat of His body and drink His blood, we will not have eternal life with Him. Even His disciples were scandalized.

When we walk with Jesus, we cannot just go half the way. We cannot just praise Him from a safe distance, sing hallelujahs to Him on His humble birth and His supreme sacrifice on the Cross and then suggest that His Resurrection was a myth as some modern-day theologians are prone to do.

If you believe that He is the Way, as he said, then it should follow that He is also the Truth and the Life. But your editorial put into question the truth of His Divinity, leaving it as an option for us to believe or not. By so doing, you have taken a big step toward the secularization of our Christian faith and the diminution of its intrinsic truth. For if He were reduced to merely a good man, He would still be a fraud if He were not the Savior God. The praises we sing to the Man called Jesus would then amount to nothing.

As the INQUIRER stands for truth, your editorial board may wish to reexamine this truth.

A Blessed Christmas to you!—**HOWARD Q. DEE, 15 Beaterio St., Urdaneta Village, Makati City**

THE INQUIRER did not challenge the Divinity of Jesus. If you will read the editorial again, you will note that the challenge came from historian and philosopher Ernest Renan and theologian David Friedrich Strauss. Our point is that, granting, without admitting, (Renan's and Strauss' thesis) that Jesus was only a man, He still was the greatest, perfect Man who ever walked on the face of the earth. You will note that we capitalized He and His in reference to Jesus. For the peace of mind of Mr. Dee, we state that we believe in the Divinity of Jesus.—**Ed.**

Equal benefits for DOLE employees

THIS is in response to the items, titled "Labor chief unfair, says DOLE union" and "Beltran denounces labor secretary" as published in the Dec. 12 and 13 issues of the INQUIRER. The public has the right to know the facts.

The issue arose from an administrative order issued by Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas authorizing an extra cash benefit of P5,000 for every employee of the Department of Labor and Employment. This benefit is based on DBM Circular No. 2001-02 authorizing payment of extra Christmas bonus chargeable to agency savings, and DBM Circular No. 2001-04, which authorizes payment of signing bonus where there is a Collective Negotiation Agreement (CNA). Both benefits are chargeable to agency savings.

Under the secretary's order, the full amount of P5,000 was characterized as an extra Christmas bonus for all employees not covered by a CNA. For employees covered by a CNA, the P5,000 is broken down into P2,000 as extra Christmas bonus, and P3,000 as signing bonus. According to the union, the differentiation is unfair because union members got a smaller Christmas bonus than non-union members.

The DOLE and its union have a CNA which became effective in 2000. The CNA covers the Office of the Secretary, the bureaus, the services and the regional offices, but not its attached agencies some of which have their own separate CNAs. The DOLE CNA provides for a signing bonus of P6,000 per employee. Under the CNA, the DOLE committed to propose in its annual budget, for inclusion in the General Appropriations Act (GAA), an item for signing bonus. In turn, the basis for this commitment is a resolution of the Public Sector Labor-Management Council which allows agencies with CNAs to pay a signing bonus to covered employees provided that: (1) the agency proposes the appropriate amount in its annual budget, (2) the amount is approved through the GAA, and (3) the cash covering this expense is released by the Department of Budget and Management. Without these conditions, payments of the signing bonus under the CNA cannot be authorized.

The DOLE included an item for signing bonus in its budget proposal for fiscal year 2002. However, for reasons beyond its control, the proposal was not approved.

On June 26, 2001, the Presidential Management Staff issued a memorandum quoting the pronouncement of the President that "she would not issue a prohibition on extra Christmas bonuses for government employees as long as the department/agency had the funds, or the department/agency head should look for a substitute program for the benefit of their employees." This is the DBM's basis for issuing its two circulars.

Some time in October, the DOLE union started making proposals to management for additional monetary benefits, including staple food allowance, performance bonus and even payment of a cost of living allowance retroactive to 1989. In November, the union made representations with management to name the benefit as signing bonus.

To implement the DBM circulars, the management decided to pool the savings of all DOLE agencies, including its attached agencies, so that all employees, whether covered by the CNA or not, will get equal amounts. It must be stressed that among the various agencies of the DOLE, some have savings and some have none. The principle is that those agencies which are more efficient in utilizing funds for program implementation should not be penalized with a smaller bonus for their employees simply because they have less savings.

That, in sum, was how the secretary's order came about. On the issue of unfairness and union-busting, it was the DOLE union itself that asked that the benefit be called a signing bonus. Characterizing part of the extra bonus as a signing bonus was management's concession to the union. On the other hand, payment of a separate signing bonus to union members only on top of the extra Christmas bonus would give union members higher total bonuses. This has no legal or equitable basis.

The union knows that the signing bonus in the CNA has not become a demandable right because the conditions for payment were not met. Neither would it be equitable for non-union members to get a smaller additional cash benefit, regardless of how it is called, when this benefit is actually funded from the same source, and each employee, regardless of agency or union affiliation, is deemed to have contributed to the realization of agency savings.—**BENEDICTO ERNESTO R. BITONIO JR., assistant secretary, Department of Labor and Employment, General Luna corner San Jose Streets, Intramuros, Manila**

Payumo has a lot of explaining to do

IN REACTION to your news report on the Antonio Payumo incident, I wish to make the following clarification.

I wonder why Chair Felicito "Tong" Payumo of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority has the habit of blaming Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon for all his woes and tribulations while he refuses to look at himself in the mirror to gaze at his own misdeeds. Take the case of the vehicular accident involving his son, Antonio Payumo, 29, who was injured when he rammed an SBMA-issued Mitsubishi Pajero against a concrete post at the Argonaut Highway inside the SBMA. His son was in the company of a nephew of Speaker Jose de Venecia, four women and an unidentified man.

How could Payumo blame Gordon for the incident, which happened after his son came from a drinking spree at the Magellan's Landing Bar? The incident happened on Dec. 1 but Payumo kept the incident from the media for a long time.

Now Payumo says Gordon was to blame for "texting" the incident to other people. No man in his right mind would believe that Gordon would be so petty as to indulge in such a cheap antic.

More than blaming Gordon for his woes, Payumo has a lot of explaining to do. Why was Payumo's son allowed to speed away in such an ungodly haste within the SBMA? Is he above the traffic rules, laws and regulations of the SBMA? Why was he allowed to use an official car in the middle of the night? Is the "For Official Use Only" policy no longer working in the SBMA?

And, pray, why is the car being hidden from law-enforcement agencies and the public, including the media? Is this not simple obstruction of justice? And last, but not least, was this the first time Antonio got away with a crime right inside the SBMA premises?

It is stupid for Payumo to explain the incident by blaming it on Gordon. He owes it to the public, who pays for his salary and funds the purchase of official SBMA cars, to make a straight public admission, instead of blaming Gordon for his son's nocturnal escapades.

Gordon is performing well at the Department of Tourism. I wish Payumo could make a similar claim about his performance in office.—**MIKE PUSING, 85 Rizal Ave., West Tapinoc, Olongapo City**

WOMEN CRISIS
CENTER

Women have nothing to fear

"WHEN it comes to violence against women, there are no grounds for tolerance and no tolerable excuses," United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan said in his speech during the observance of International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

This very same thought is now my only wish for the coming new year. And it goes for both men and women in our society.

I wish for the men to realize that they do not have to be scared of us women. Men are scared of us being equals with them because they know that anything they can do, we can do as well, if not better. They are scared that if we are able to go beyond their achievements, they will lose their manhood and the respect of the other men around them This may be one of the many reasons they resort to beating up their women.

Just the thought of being bested by a woman gets the men panicking and the only way they know to stop this from happening is the savage way of abuse by beating women up physically and mentally.

A lot of pain and death among women happen because men are scared to face the fact that women are. We live. We are a part of them. If they live, we live.

Now I ask that all women stand up for themselves and not be afraid. We need not be scared like men do. We can make the horrors stop. No excuses. Pain does not mean love and love should not blind us to pain.

For this New Year, my only wish is for everyone to learn to accept every person as he or she is, to respect every life, and to live by God's love.—**KRISTINE SHARON C. TARUC, 381 Architect St., Phase F, Francisco Homes, San Jose del Monte, Bulacan**

Enforcing discipline in WPD

I AGREE with Police Director Edgar Aglipay's no-nonsense handling of the misdemeanors of some members of the Western Police District.

His is a lonely struggle to instill professionalism, discipline and order in the WPD. Complacency and mediocrity have no place in law enforcement.

The disgruntled few have been used to laxity in supervision. Aglipay, who is an officer and a gentlemen, is simply trying to make errant police personnel conform with the rigid norms of police discipline.

I don't know Aglipay, but I am rooting for him. Keep up the good work, sir.—**CRAIG C. GONZALES, Novaliches, Quezon City**

IF you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to Nos. 897-4793, 897-4794, or e-mail readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph

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A 'politician-made' disaster in Alabang

THE TRAFFIC in Alabang below the viaduct is fast becoming a "politician-made" disaster.

Since Alabang is the center of trade of south Metro Manila, many people go to and from its many residential areas and places of business. During the peak hours, people and vehicles are squeezed at the southeast corner of the Muntinlupa public market in spite of the wide roads and sidewalks, because the sidewalks are occupied by stalls and the main road going to Filinvest is reduced by 20 percent by a yellow iron fence to prevent vendors and pedestrians from occupying an even bigger portion of the road.

It is here where one can find two big fruit stalls. Inside the stalls are carton boxes, while the fruits are displayed on the road and the sidewalk. I suspect that this business is being run by a family with strong political connections, since these stalls seem to be "untouchable."

Perhaps the city government of Muntinlupa wants to please everybody. Thus it has no political will to impose discipline. The chaos in the street places everyone—motorist, vendor, pedestrian and even traffic aide—at risk. And all in the name of business!—**IGNACIO G. ANACTA, Alabang, Muntinlupa City**

India-Pakistan row shows nuclear safety is failing

FEATURE

Sanjeev Miglani

NEW DELHI—A scenario devised as a model by the US Naval War College ends with India and Pakistan in a limited nuclear exchange in which millions of people die after tension over bitterly disputed Kashmir boils over.

The simulation was conducted soon after the neighbors carried out nuclear tests in 1998, but the scenario is chillingly similar to the current threat of war over anti-Indian Kashmiri separatists operating from Pakistan.

It also highlights the dangers of both countries' failure to establish cross-border safety measures to minimize the risk of a dispute flaring into nuclear catastrophe.

In the simulation, India, blaming Pakistan for the downing of a plane carrying top ministers and military brass over Indian-ruled Kashmir, launches air and artillery strikes on guerrilla bases inside Pakistan-ruled Kashmir.

Pakistan responds with conventional forces, but fear of India's superiority in that area prompt it to launch a nuclear strike, triggering nuclear retaliation from New Delhi and killing more than 2 million people.

When? The scenario was set in 2003.

India accused Islamabad of trying to wipe out its political leadership in a Dec. 13 attack by militants on the national parliament and says all options for retaliation remain open.

Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, whose shaky coalition rule will be tested in state elections in February, says he does not want war but it is being thrust upon India by Pakistan's failure to act against the Muslim separatist militants.

Last week, New Delhi stepped up the pressure, announcing it was recalling its envoy to Islamabad because Pakistan would not end its support of what India calls cross-border terrorism.

It says moves so far to detain some militant leaders and freeze some assets do not go far enough and make a "mockery" of the gravity of the situation.

Islamabad, which denies involvement in the parliament assault, has promised a strong response to any military strike.

The lack of any safety mechanisms to prevent an accidental exchange of nuclear weapons or a miscalculation by leaders of either nation has been a concern since they crossed the nuclear Rubicon.

Hopes of any progress on reducing the nuclear risk have now faded after Vajpayee said he would not hold one-on-one talks with Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf during a summit of regional leaders in the Nepali capital, Kathmandu, next week.

In the current climate, some analysts doubt the summit will even go ahead, despite assurances from New Delhi.

Experts on both sides of the border and abroad have long argued India and Pakistan need, above all, to establish joint measures to boost nuclear safety.

"The need for a common language to understand each other's signaling, such as sounding different states of alert in an emergency, is of supreme importance to defuse future crises and avoid conflict," said P.R. Chari, a nuclear expert at the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies.

More than three years after their nuclear tests, the composition, size and deployment patterns of Indian and Pakistani forces remain unclear, adding to the risk of miscalculation or accident.

Worse still, India, which plans an ambitious nuclear arsenal based on ships, missiles and aircraft, has yet to establish a clear nuclear command and control structure.

The only thing known about India's secretive nuclear system is that the button lies in the hands of the prime minister. There is also a cabinet committee on security including the defense and foreign ministers which would presumably be consulted before any deployment.

But beyond that nothing is known about the nuclear chain of command which will carry out the government's orders. The role of the military, which was kept out of the nuclear weapons program from the start, remains unclear.

"The virtual non-involvement of the armed forces in the country's nuclear weapons program has undermined the credibility of India's nuclear deterrent and raised doubts about the security of nuclear weapons," wrote nuclear expert Gurmeet Kanwal in the Strategic Analysis, a publication of the government-funded Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses.

Pakistan, whose nuclear program caused concern in the early stages of the US-led military campaign in Afghanistan, has in contrast established a Nuclear Command and Control Authority consisting of military, political and scientific officials.

Indian officials say Pakistan has been faster in setting forth its nuclear structures because its program has always been controlled by the military.

"They see these weapons as military weapons, meant for use in the battlefield," said a top defense official. "India perceives them as political weapons valued for their deterrence effect."

The bombs on both sides are thought to be in storage, rather than loaded on to planes or missiles.

An Indian political expert said the United States may ultimately have to step in to prod India and Pakistan to build nuclear confidence measures because of the risks involved.

"The US must take an active interest in pushing India and Pakistan to enter into a confidence-building agreement on nuclear and missile matters," said Jairam Ramesh, a political commentator and a member of India's main opposition Congress party.

Even the Newport-based US Naval War College concluded Washington was better off engaging the Indian and Pakistani governments to set up nuclear safeguards, rather than urging them to abandon nuclear weapons which, it said, would be just "wishful thinking."

Reuters

A beacon of hope to Lumads

THE PROPAGANDA mill of the Armed Forces of the Philippines is at it again. It has been directing anti-communist hysteria against religious missionaries who are taking the side of indigenous peoples defending their ancestral domain.

One recent victim is Sr. Mary John Dumaug of the Religious of the Good Shepherd, who has been vilified by the military as "the brains" and "a front" of the communist movement in Balit, San Luis, Agusan del Sur. The last time we heard such diatribes was during the dark days of martial law when priests, nuns, and lay leaders were branded as "devils," "Lucifer," " etc. for actively exposing military atrocities under the dictator Marcos.

As an association of more than 250 sisters coming from 36 congregations in Mindanao, the Sisters' Association in Mindanao (Samin) is solidly behind Sr. Mary John Dumaug, RGS. We know her as one of the few missionary sisters who have chosen to live among the people to be a beacon of hope and love in the midst of their abject poverty.

It is easy to understand that Sister John has become the object of military scorn. Her 17-year presence among the Lumads in Balit, San Luis, has empowered the Lumads living in that remote and forsaken village and turned it into a self-determining community. She has become a "thorn" in the side of high-ranking military officials whom she has invited every so often to community dialogues to bring to their attention the complaints of residents about soldiers' abuses.

With Sister John's prophetic ministry, the Banwaons have developed a growing awareness of their ancestral domain. This consciousness has emboldened them to oppose the entry of big tree plantations and mining firms whose owners are among the nation's rich and powerful. In the experience of most religious sisters in Mindanao, the AFP facilitates the encroachment of these firms by silencing communities through military operations and red-baiting.

It is apparent that the AFP is employing the "Alsa Lumad" scheme to divide and rule over the Banwaons in San Luis. "Alsa Lumad" is a poor, hideous copy of the "Alsa Masa" which was the purveyor of the anti-communist witch-hunt during the post-Edsa period.

The AFP thinks that by pitting Lumad against Lumad, it can effectively break the unity of the Banwaon community in San Luis against any "development aggression." But it is mistaken. Contrary to what it likes to portray, the military is a discredited establishment among most Lumads in Mindanao, with its long list of human rights abuses and crimes since the time of Marcos.

The Mindanao church will not be cowed by this kind of persecution. We salute Sr. Mary John Dumaug for her missionary zeal.—**SR. MARIA CONSUELO FLAUTA, OND, chair of the board, Sisters' Association in Mindanao (Samin), P.O. Box 81519, Davao City 8000**

India, Pakistan trade sanctions

NEW DELHI—India and Pakistan woke to talk of a South Asian "Cold War" on Friday, after the two nuclear rivals traded harsh diplomatic sanctions and their armed forces stared each other down on the border.

The regional crisis stemming from the Dec. 13 terror attack on the Indian parliament deepened on Thursday as India announced a ban on Pakistan airlines using its airspace and a 50-percent cut in embassy staff in both countries.

Pakistan swiftly responded with reciprocal measures.

The turning of diplomatic screws triggered fresh expressions of concern from the international community, with the United States informing both countries that their rapidly escalating standoff could detract from its war on terrorism.

"This is something we're keeping our eye on very carefully, and we have clearly made the interests we have in this subject known to both sides very carefully and with clarity," said US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld.

Rumsfeld also alluded to concerns that Pakistan may be forced to redeploy manpower from its border with Afghanistan—where scores of troops are hunting terror suspect Osama bin Laden and his supporters.

British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw said he was "deeply concerned" and called on both countries to "work together to resolve their differences."

India says the Dec. 13 attack was backed by Pakistani intelligence and has demanded that Islamabad take action to shut down two Pakistan-based Kashmiri militant groups it accuses of carrying out the operation which left 14 people dead.

The tit-for-tat sanctions announced on Thursday prompted grim headlines in the Indian newspapers.

"Delhi Declares Cold War" was the front-page banner in the Asian Age, echoed by the Indian Express with "Cold War Heats Up."

India had already withdrawn its ambassador from Islamabad last week and snapped cross-border rail and bus links.

With the second round of sanctions, New Delhi has used up much of the weaponry in its diplomatic arsenal, although analysts said it could still opt to withdraw from a bilateral water sharing treaty over the Indus River—a drastic step that would have a severe economic and social impact on Pakistan.

Announcing the sanctions on Thursday, Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh refused to specify a bottom line for Pakistani compliance with New Delhi's demands for a crackdown on the Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad militant groups.

Singh described the actions announced by Islamabad so far as a series of "cosmetic measures, half-measures and even fictitious incidents."

Indian Defense Minister George Fernandes on Thursday described the situation as "grave" but said diplomatic efforts should be given time even as fresh troops were being moved to the border.

"In the next two to three days, the deployment process will be completed and the forces will be ready for any eventuality," Fernandes said.

In Islamabad, military spokesperson Maj. Gen. Rashid Qureshi said Pakistan could retaliate in "all conceivable ways" to any Indian escalation of their dispute but described a nuclear war as unthinkable. *AFP*

PAKISTANI soldiers install an anti-aircraft gun near Kemari oil terminal in Karachi Dec. 27. Pakistan and nuclear rival India have edged toward war in recent days following a suicide attack on the Indian parliament earlier this month that India blames on Pakistani extemists. REUTERS

'Shoe-bomb' Reid says he worked alone

BOSTON—British-born Richard Reid, suspected of an attempted suicide bombing aboard a US plane using explosives stashed in his shoes, told the FBI he built the bomb alone, French sources said Thursday.

Reid, 28, who is being held in Boston, told Federal Bureau of Investigation interrogators that he bought the explosives, pentrite, in Amsterdam for $1,500, according to French sources close to the investigation.

He was said to have found the sellers through the Internet.

The French sources said the FBI had contacted Belgian, Dutch and French police to inform them of the danger of such websites.

Meanwhile, the attorney who will defend Reid urged the public to keep an open mind ahead of a preliminary court hearing here scheduled for Friday.

Reid allegedly tried to set fire to his sneakers on an American Airlines flight from Paris to Miami that was diverted to Boston Saturday. Investigators say the explosives were powerful enough to have created a major disaster.

The suspect, initially detained after the flight, has been held without bail since Monday when he was formally charged with intimidation and interfering with a flight crew, offenses that carry 20-year jail terms.

Since his arrest, speculation linking the suspect, a recent convert to Islam, to extremist groups has swirled amid indications that Reid was working with others, given the sophistication of the devices in his shoes.

But Reid's court-appointed lawyer, Tamar Birckhead, said she was unaware of any evidence supporting a link to terrorism and vowed to vigorously defend the suspect.

"We are unaware of any evidence to support a link between the offense charged and any terrorist organization or individual," Birckhead said in a statement Wednesday.

"We urge the press and public to maintain open minds as the criminal justice system proceeds."

Investigators have been tight-lipped about the case, but US media report they are probing links between Reid and the militant al-Qaida group, blamed for Sept. 11 suicide attacks with hijacked airliners that killed some 3,000 in the United States.

US Magistrate Judith Dein scheduled an initial hearing for 11 a.m. Friday for prosecutors to present their case against him. So far that includes no evidence pointing to a terrorism conspiracy, said Birckhead.

The FBI declined to say Friday whether new evidence or charges had been filed in the case. *AFP*

Australia bracing for 'fiery' weekend

SYDNEY—Firefighters battling about 100 fires in Australia were hoping lighter winds would help ease their workload Friday but were predicting "nasty" conditions over the weekend.

More than 100 fires were still burning in an arc around Sydney although it has been more than 24 hours since any homes were destroyed.

The Fire Service said the weather change should allow them to concentrate more on preventative action.

Mark Sullivan, from the Rural Fire Service, said while conditions may be easier Friday the outlook for the weekend had them worried.

"It certainly appears from the weather forecast, with very high temperatures and high winds that it certainly could be a nasty couple of days ahead," Sullivan said.

Meanwhile, police at Shell-harbour, a 90-minute drive south of Sydney, have arrested three 15-year-old boys suspected of starting bushfires.

All three have been interviewed but no charges have been laid. *AFP*

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DECEMBER 22

9:00 am to 3:00 pm
Araneta Center
Aurora Blvd.

10:00 am to 4:00 pm
New Divisoria

11:00 am to 5:00 pm
Tutuban

12:00 nn to 6:00 pm
Divisoria Center

DECEMBER 24

9:00 am to 3:00 pm
ADB
Head Office
Pasay-Libertad

DECEMBER 29

8:00 am to 2:00 pm
San Nicolas

8:30 am to 2:30 pm
Gen. Luna-Paco

9:00 am to 3:00 pm
20th Avenue-P. Tuazon
A. Lacson
Anonas-
Aurora Blvd.
EDSA-Shaw
Farmers Plaza
Pasig-Mabini
Pateros
Pureza
UST-España

10:00 am to 4:00 pm
Tutuban Centermall 2

11:00 am to 5:00 pm
Tutuban

DECEMBER 30

9:00 am to 3:00 pm
Q. C. Rotonda Center

DECEMBER 31

9:00 am to 3:00 pm
Alabang
Divisoria Center
Folgueras
Head Office
Ireneville-Sucat
Kabihasnan

10:00 am to 4:00 pm
Tondo

LUZON

DECEMBER 22

9:00 am to 3:00 pm
Agoo, La Union
Aparri
Baguio-Bonifacio
Baguio-Cariño
Baguio-Magsaysay
Baguio-Naguilian
Baguio-Session
Bangued, Abra
Batac, Ilocos Norte
Bulan
Cabanatuan-Paco Roman
Calamba Real
Calapan
Candon
Cauayan
Daraga, Albay
Gumaca
Ilagan
La Trinidad, Benguet
La Union
La Union-ML Quezon
Laoag
Laoag-Gen. Segundo Ave.
Legazpi-Mabini
Lucena-Quezon
Masbate
Naga
Occidental Mindoro
Santiago
Santiago-City Road
Siniloan
Solano
Sorsogon
Tabaco, Albay
Tuguegarao
Vigan

DECEMBER 29

9:00 am to 3:00 pm
Agoo, La Union
Alaminos, Pangasinan
Apalit
Aparri
Baguio-Bonifacio
Baguio-Cariño
Baguio-Magsaysay
Baguio-Naguilian
Baguio-Session
Balanga, Bataan
Baliuag
Baliuag-Trinidad Highway
Bangued, Abra
Batac, Ilocos Norte
Cabanatuan
Cabanatuan Maharlika-North
Calapan
Candon
Carmen, Rosales, Pangasinan
Cauayan
Daet
Dagupan-Perez
Daraga, Albay
Dinalupihan, Bataan
Guagua
Gumaca
Hagonoy, Bulacan
Iba, Zambales
Ilagan
Iriga, Camarines Sur
La Trinidad, Benguet
La Union
La Union-ML Quezon
Laoag
Laoag-Gen. Segundo Ave.
Legazpi, Albay
Los Baños
Lucena
Muñoz, Nueva Ecija
Naga-Peñafrancia
Occidental Mindoro
Olongapo
Palawan
San Fernando, Pampanga
San Fernando-B. Mendoza
San Fernando-Dolores
San Fernando-Sindalan
San Jose, Nueva Ecija
San Miguel, Bulacan
San Pablo-Colago
Santiago
Santiago-City Road
Solano
Sorsogon
Subic Bay
Subic-Baraca
Tabaco
Tuguegarao
Urdaneta, Pangasinan
Vigan

DECEMBER 30

9:00 am to 3:00 pm
Apalit
Calamba-Crossing
San Pablo-Maharlika Highway
Sta. Maria-Poblacion Market

DECEMBER 31

9:00 am to 3:00 pm
Apalit
Balanga, Bataan
Balayan-Batangas
Baliuag
Baliuag-Trinidad Highway
Batangas
Bauan-Batangas
Dagupan
Dagupan-Fernandez
Dinalupihan, Bataan
Esteban Mayo-Lipa
Guagua
Hagonoy, Bulacan
Iba, Zambales
Kumintang Ilaya-Batangas
Lemery-Batangas
Lipa
Lipa-Ayala
Nasugbu, Batangas
Olongapo
Rosario-Batangas
San Carlos, Pangasinan
San Fernando, Pampanga
San Fernando-B. Mendoza
San Fernando-Dolores
San Fernando-Sindalan
San Miguel, Bulacan
Subic Bay
Subic-Baraca
Tanauan

9:00 am to 4:00 pm
San Pablo
Sta. Cruz, Laguna

VISAYAS

DECEMBER 22

9:00 am to 3:00 pm
Antique

DECEMBER 24

9:00 am to 3:00 pm
Cebu-Taboan

DECEMBER 29

9:00 am to 3:00 pm
Bacolod-Araneta
Bacolod-Capitol
Bacolod-Gonzaga
Bacolod-Libertad
Baybay
Maasin
Silay, Neg. Occidental

DECEMBER 31

9:00 am to 3:00 pm
Bacolod-6th Street
Bacolod-Gatuslao
Cebu-Carbon
Cebu-Downtown Center
Cebu-Taboan
Roxas
Roxas-Burgos
San Carlos

MINDANAO

DECEMBER 22

9:00 am to 3:00 pm
General Santos-Pioneer
General Santos-Santiago

DECEMBER 23

9:00 am to 3:00 pm
Zamboanga

DECEMBER 24

9:00 am to 3:00 pm
Pagadian

DECEMBER 29

9:00 am to 3:00 pm
Cotabato-Rufino Alonzo
Marbel
Midsayap

DECEMBER 30

9:00 am to 3:00 pm
Zamboanga
Zamboanga-Brillantes
Zamboanga-Galleria
Zamboanga-Veterans

DECEMBER 31

8:30 am to 2:30 pm
Davao-Agdao
Davao-Bajada
Davao-Bankerohan
Davao-Buhangin
Davao Center
Davao-Ecoland
Davao-Matina
Davao-Monteverdie
Davao-Panabo
Davao-Rizal
Davao-San Pedro
Davao-Sta. Ana
Digos
Tagum
Toril

DECEMBER 31

9:00 am to 3:00 pm
Basilan
Butuan
Cagayan de Oro-Cogon
Cagayan de Oro-Divisoria Park
Cagayan de Oro-Lapasan
Cagayan de Oro-Velez
Dipolog
Ozamis
Ozamis-Burgos
Pagadian
Surigao
Valencia, Bukidnon

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Israel ends Bethlehem cordon

A PALESTINIAN waits to pass through the border from the Gaza Strip, via Israel, to Egypt at the Rafah border crossing Dec. 27. REUTERS

JERUSALEM—Israel announced an end to the blockade around Bethlehem as a Christmas gesture but upheld its travel ban on Yasser Arafat despite international protests.

A government spokesperson said Thursday the Palestinian leader would not be able to attend Orthodox Christmas observances in Bethlehem on Jan. 6 unless he arrests the killers of an Israeli Cabinet minister.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian Authority accused Israel of trying to sabotage truce efforts after Israeli troops raided Palestinian territory Thursday for the second straight day in pursuit of suspected militants.

Also Thursday, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon assured critics in his right-wing Likud Party that he, and not moderate Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, will manage future peace negotiations with the Palestinians. "When the day comes for peace talks, I will run them," Sharon said.

Peres has been holding informal talks with Palestinian Parliament Speaker Ahmed Qureia, a key negotiator, in the past few weeks. They have been discussing a framework for a possible peace deal in which Israel's recognition of a Palestinian state would be a first step, officials on both sides said.

The two sides remain far apart on the dimensions of such a state and hopes for progress are slim, but Sharon has nonetheless come under fire from his hardline constituents for not stopping the Peres-Qureia contacts.

Sharon insisted again Thursday that there can be no peace negotiations before all violence stops. But he added: "The contacts can continue on a specific issue to aid us in reaching an end to terrorism and to a ceasefire."

Defense Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer announced late Thursday that Israel was lifting the blockade around Bethlehem, birthplace of Christ, to ease access to holy sites during the Christmas season.

The roadblocks have choked off the town, the birthplace of Christ, along with other West Bank Palestinian centers, throughout most of the 15 months of Palestinian-Israeli fighting.

The Israelis say the restrictions are necessary to keep militant attackers out of Israel, and tightened the closures earlier this month after a series of Palestinian suicide bomb attacks.

On Wednesday, Israeli troops lifted the blockade around Jericho, a Palestinian town in the Jordan River valley.

Arafat has been marooned at his West Bank headquarters in Ramallah since an Israeli air strike destroyed his helicopters on Dec. 3 in response to the suicide bombings.

Thursday, soldiers fired tear gas and stun grenades into a crowd of about 40 European protesters a few hundred meters from Arafat's compound. No injuries were reported.

The day before, demonstrators from the same group said police punched and wrestled them to the ground as they tried to enter the Gaza Strip for a two-day solidarity visit with Palestinians. The police said no violence was used to turn them back.

Israel barred Arafat from traveling to Bethlehem for Christmas Eve festivities held this week in accordance with the Western calendar, prompting worldwide criticism, including from the United States.

Sharon adviser Raanan Gissin said Thursday that Arafat would be permitted to leave Ramallah only after he arrests the militants who killed Israeli Tourism Minister Rehavam Zeevi on Oct. 17.

Israel will not relent, even to allow Arafat to attend the Orthodox Christmas celebrations in Bethlehem on Jan. 6, Gissin said.

Arafat, a Muslim, has attended Christmas festivities in Jesus' traditional birthplace since Israel handed the town over to Palestinian control in 1995. *AP*

Brazil mudslides death toll hits 52

RIO DE JANEIRO—Rescue workers raised the death toll from heavy Christmas Eve rains and mudslides in Rio de Janeiro state to 52 on Thursday and warned the number could still rise, as President Fernando Henrique Cardoso toured the disaster area.

"It breaks my heart," Cardoso told reporters during his visit to neighborhoods most devastated by the rains, pledging unspecified aid for the state as a "presidential urgency," but making clear its release was tied up in red tape.

Tons of mud

As the skies cleared on Thursday, teams renewed efforts to dig through tons of mud, garbage and rubble, but officials said they were unlikely to find any survivors and warned the number of casualties could climb still higher.

"Today the rain stopped and we can work without exposing our personnel to risks of new mudslides," said Col. Joao Bosco, head of the state civil defense department. "But, unfortunately, we only expect to recover dead bodies now."

Officials said a total of 52 bodies had been recovered and some 30 people were still unaccounted for.

Bosco added that the number of the missing could still rise or fall because Christmas festivities may have united more than the usual number of residents in some homes that collapsed or may have drawn them away to other, safe places.

Nearly all the victims were in mostly illegal hillside settlements, many of which were practically washed away by rains and mudslides, burying entire families in their flimsy homes under tons of thick brown mud and stones.

Deluge

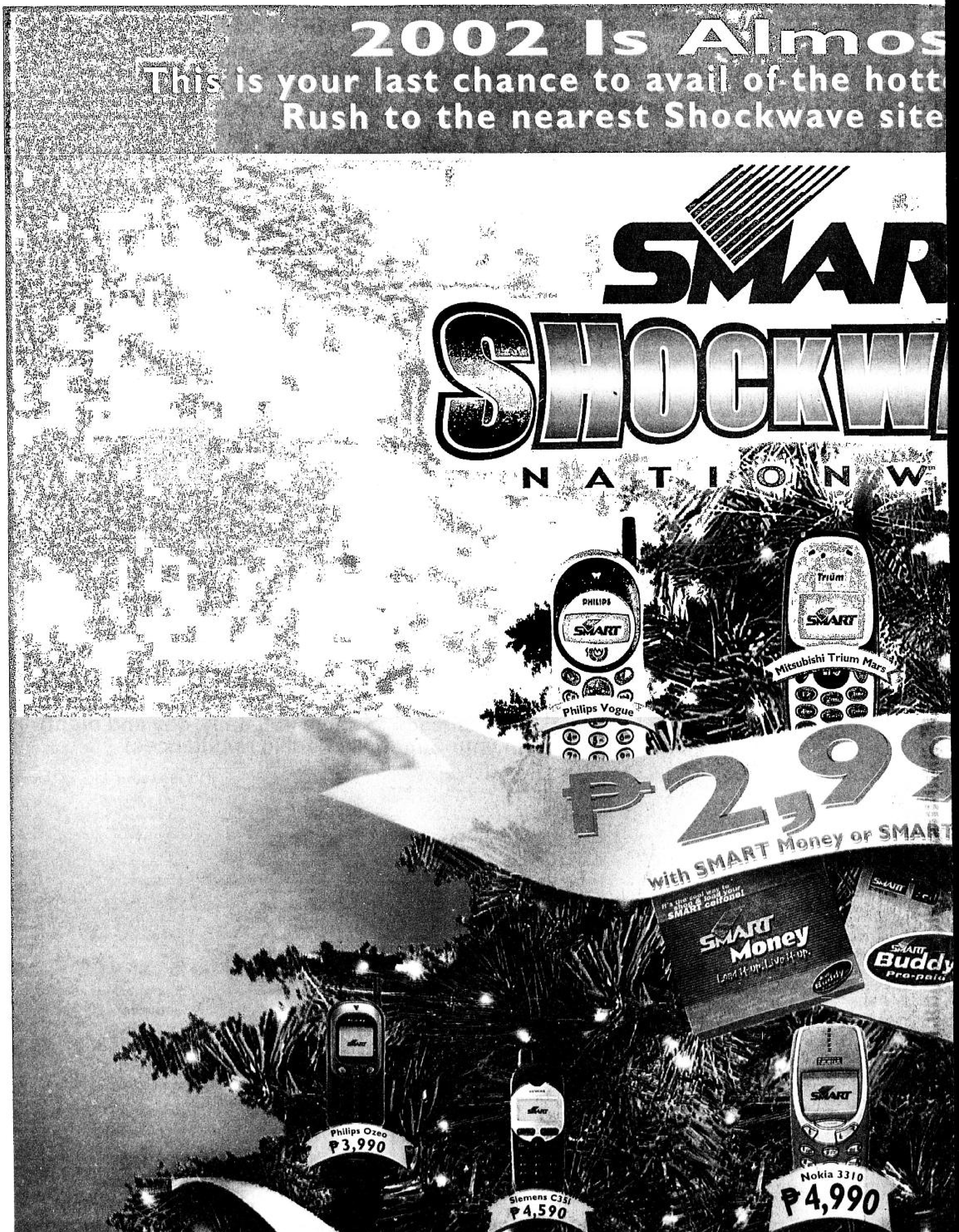
In Petropolis, a popular weekend retreat in the mountains near Rio where most deaths occurred, even sturdier middle class houses collapsed.

"In Petropolis they had one month's average rainfall in just a few hours. It was a record, a deluge," Bosco said, labeling the disaster "the worst this millennium in Brazil."

Television footage and newspaper photographs showed rescue workers in respirators unearthing bodies from mud under ruins that still bore Christmas decorations on what used to be walls.

In the tourist mecca of Rio, five people died in the infamous hillside "favela" shantytowns as their houses collapsed. On Wednesday, 20 evacuated houses in one favela crumbled as their residents watched in despair.

More than 1,000 people were left homeless in the state and hundreds were evacuated to schools, gymnasiums and churches where they were receiving food and clothes from donations as well as municipal and state government aid. *Reuters*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Legalize dogmeat, S. Korea solons reply

SEOUL—South Korean lawmakers put forth a bill on Friday to legalize the commercial slaughter of dogs in a bid to stem international criticism and protect the custom of eating dogmeat.

Some dogs are bred to be eaten in South Korea, notably in poshintang, literally "body preservation stew," which advocates say is good for the health.

But while culinary canines rank third as commercial livestock in South Korea behind cattle and pigs, dogs raised for food fall outside the Livestock Processing Act.

Unregulated slaughter has spawned abuses including burning, beating and boiling of live dogs—drawing sharp criticism from overseas animal activists in the run up to next year's World Cup soccer finals, which Korea will cohost with Japan.

The bill to bring dogmeat under commercial livestock laws, proposed by 20 ruling and opposition legislators, follows a bitter spat pitting French actress-turned-activist Brigitte Bardot against angry South Korean dogmeat defenders.

Bardot touched off a nationalistic outcry in Korea when she told local media she would distribute protest pictures depicting the torture of dogs before next year's World Cup soccer finals.

Her campaign drew a torrent of attacks and threats, with anti-Bardot websites launched carrying Korean profanities and pornographic references to Bardot's fame as a cinema sex symbol.

The 67-year-old Bardot said Koreans who treated her protest as a cultural slight missed her point, which was opposition to the cruelty involved in preparing dogs. *Reuters*

Argentina to tackle social crisis ahead of debt woes

BUENOS AIRES—The Argentine government will try to solve its social crisis before fulfilling its massive debt obligations or negotiating with the IMF, interim President Adolfo Rodriguez Saa said late Thursday.

"We have explained to the IMF that first we must solve the social emergency, because (social) exclusion and unemployment must be dealt with," he said. "We are going to present a sustainable program but first we ask for patience."

Four days ago, as he took office in the wake of a bloody, nationwide uprising that forced former president Fernando de la Rua to resign, Rodriguez Saa suspended payments on the South American country's $132-billion debt.

It was the biggest such default in history.

Rodriguez Saa said he had asked the International Monetary Fund's number two, Anne Krueger, for "understanding" in the wake of his decision to suspend debt payments.

IMF and Argentine officials will meet in January, the leader noted, although an exact date and venue have not yet been decided.

Meanwhile, one day after Rodriguez Saa announced that a new currency, the Argentino, would circulate from January alongside the peso and dollar, the peso plunged from its one-to-one peg with the dollar to 1.30 on the black market.

Argentina is mired in a 43-month recession, widely blamed on the choking effect on exporters of the strong peso, which is officially tied one-to-one with the dollar.

The creation of the Argentino was the only option to avoid either "dollarization"—adopting only dollars in the economy—or devaluing the peso, Rodriguez Saa said Wednesday.

Late Thursday, while the new leader underlined that Argentina "must be a champion in doing things right and not just in winning at sport," Mercosur and Spanish officials expressed their concern about the situation.

Spain, a big investor in Argentina, warned against quick fixes as the financially-crippled nation raced to print its new currency.

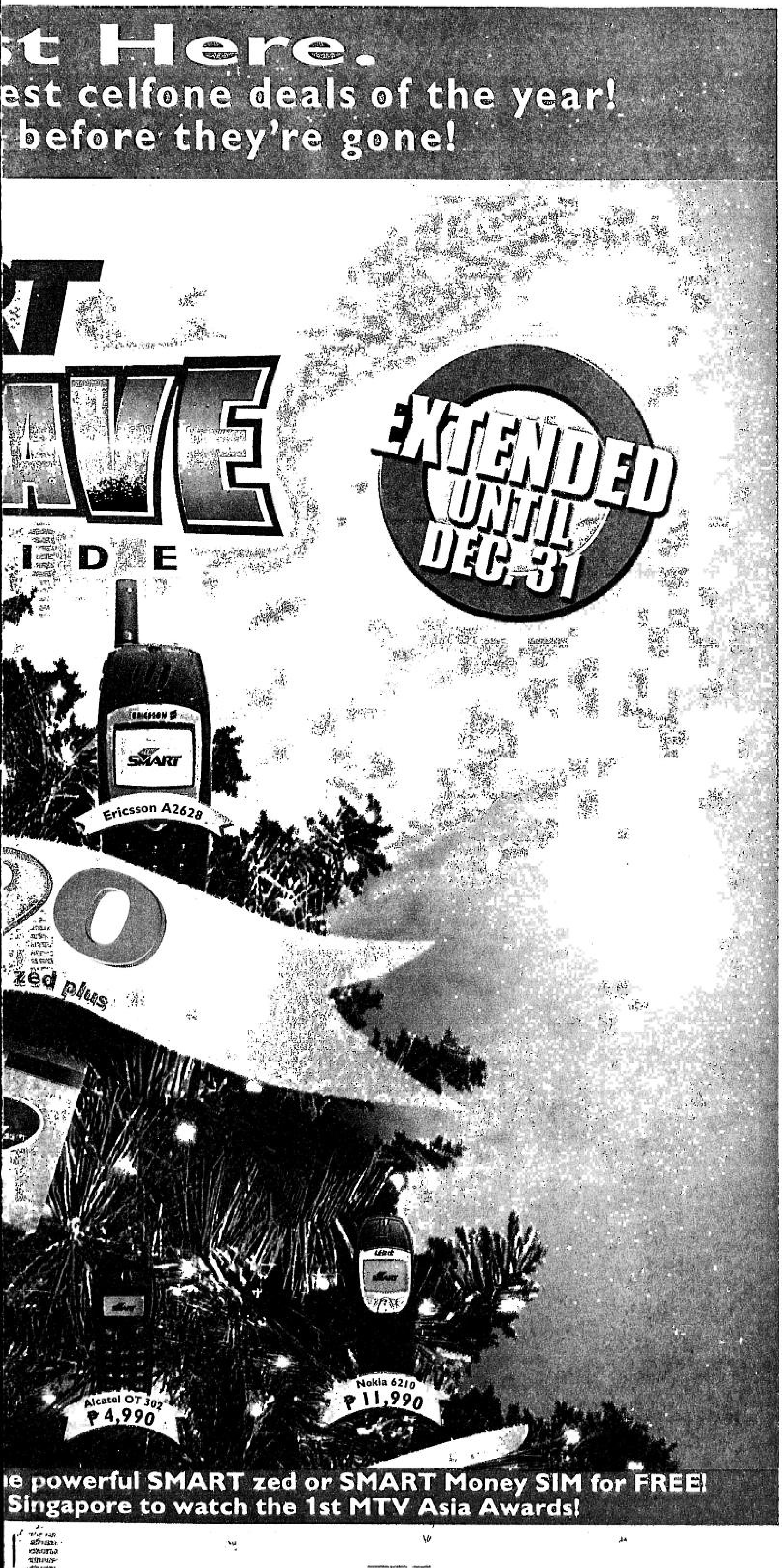
Spanish Foreign Minister Josep Pique said Argentina could restore the confidence of the international financial system so long as "there are serious, rigorous, foreseeable policies that respect the rules of the game."

Pique, speaking after a meeting with the Argentine president, warned against "searching for short-term policies for problems that have to be resolved over the medium and long-term."

Uruguayan President Jorge Batlle paid a visit to express Mercosur's support for Rodriguez Saa and Argentina, as well as transfer the regional trade bloc's rotating presidency to him at a meeting Thursday in Buenos Aires.

While Batlle declined to speak to the press, a government source later said he had expressed support but underlined the group's concern at "the depth of the crisis and the tools (being used) to give a few urgent solutions."

Earlier Thursday, IMF chief Horst Koehler said he was ready to work with the Argentine government, according to a copy of a letter written by Koehler. *AFP*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Megawati lackluster government assailed

JAKARTA—Indonesian human rights groups blasted President Megawati Sukarnoputri's six-month-old administration saying efforts to reform the nation after three decades of dictatorial, corrupt rule have ground to a halt under her leadership.

"There has been no progress whatsoever in the last six months," Ifdal Khasim of the Human Rights Studies Institute said Friday.

Other leading non-governmental organizations, including the Urban Poor Consortium, Women's Solidarity, and the Forum on Indonesian Development joined in criticizing what they termed Megawati's "do-nothing administration."

Megawati became Indonesia's vice president in 1999, following the collapse of the 32-year dictatorship of former President Suharto. She was elevated to the presidency in July, after a coalition consisting of Suharto loyalists, conservative Muslim parties and hardline military commanders ousted reformist head of state Abdurrahman Wahid through a parliamentary maneuver.

Corruption

At her inauguration, she vowed to reform the graft-ridden economy, combat the endemic corruption left over from Suharto, and bring Indonesia's brutal military under civilian control.

Critics now say she has failed on all counts, claiming that she has preferred to collaborate with the remnants of the Suharto regime, rather than work with reform-minded politicians and military leaders.

They cited Megawati's alleged unwillingness to crack down on high-profile corruption cases, such as those involving Suharto and parliamentary Speaker Akbar Tandjung, who is also the head of Suharto's once-ruling Golkar Party.

The government is considering formally dropping charges against Suharto, 80, who is accused of siphoning off $583 million of state funds during his last years in power.

There has been no move to prosecute Tandjung, who is accused of stealing the equivalent of $4 million from a government agency and using the money to fund his party's 1999 election campaign. Golkar played a key role in catapulting Megawati to the presidency by supporting impeachment proceedings against her predecessor.

Government spokespersons were unavailable for comment on Friday.

"The government must enforce the law against corrupters from both the past regime and the present one," Binny Buchori of the Forum on Indonesian Development said at a year-end news conference Thursday. *AP*

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3 angles eyed in mayor's ambush

BANGUED, Abra—Police are looking into politics, personal grudge and involvement of communist rebels as motives behind the murder of Mayor Jose Segundo of Tubo, Abra, on Thursday.

Supt. Arturo Quilop, Abra police director, said investigators are zeroing in on three angles for the killing of Segundo, 61, a known faith healer who once served as assistant to faith healer and former Baguio City Mayor Ramon Labo Jr.

Simeon Binong, one of Segundo's four companions, said the mayor was to marry his daughter, Maribless, in February next year.

He said they were on their way to Barangay Dilong in Tubo to attend a wedding, where the mayor was a sponsor, when armed men shot and killed Segundo in Barangay Tubtuba, also in Tubo.

Tubo is located along the triboundary of Abra, Ilocos Sur and Mt. Province and is 70 km southeast of the capital town of Bangued.

A police report said a lone gunman shot Segundo in the back. Police recovered a spent M-16 Armalite shell from the scene.

Segundo died before reaching Bessang Pass Memorial Hospital in Cervantes, Ilocos Sur.

A source told the INQUIRER that communist rebels had been demanding payment from Segundo for campaigning in the interior areas of Tubo during the May 14 elections.

Segundo reportedly gave only partial payment but the rebels wanted him to pay the full amount.

"We are asking for justice for the death of Mayor Segundo," said Maribless Binong.

Segundo, who ran under the Partido Demokratikong Sosialista ng Pilipinas (PDSP) as the party mate of Abra Gov. Vicente Valera, was serving his second term as Tubo mayor.

He started his political career as acting mayor in 1986.

In 1988, he ran and won as Tubo mayor. He lost in his reelection bid in 1992 but regained the post in 1998. *Leoncio Balbin Jr., with a report from Nathan Alcantara, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

MARIBLESS Binong, friend of the late mayor Jose Segundo, of Tubo, Abra, at his wake in Bangued, Abra.
LEONCIO BALBIN JR.

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The Eastern section of the country will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers.
SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	HI 29° Lo 19°
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	HI 21° Lo 10°
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	HI 24° Lo 15°
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	HI 31° Lo 18°
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	HI 28° Lo 18°
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	HI 27° Lo 16°
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	HI 29° Lo 23°
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	HI 28° Lo 19°
Bacolod	Partly Cloudy	HI 29° Lo 22°
Roxas	Partly Cloudy	HI 29° Lo 24°
Cebu	Partly Cloudy	HI 29° Lo 23°
Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains	HI 29° Lo 23°
Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy	HI 32° Lo 26°
Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy	HI 31° Lo 23°
Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy	HI 29° Lo 22°
Davao	Cloudy with Rains	HI 29° Lo 23°

Compiled by: Ray Leyesa, PDI Research/12/29/01

ROUNDUP

Missing boy rescued

DAVAO CITY—A four-year-old boy who was reported missing on Dec. 13 in Tagum City, was rescued in Kabacan, North Cotabato on Sunday afternoon. The lone kidnapper, identified as Anex Maniling, 19, was arrested by joint elements of the National Bureau of Investigation and the police during an entrapment operation at the public market in Barangay Cayaga in Kabacan. Maniling was the baker of the victim's family. Senior Supt. Hilario Cain, acting regional police chief, identified the victim as Jade Manloza.

Anthony Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Gov't engineer slain

DAVAO CITY—A provincial government engineer was gunned down by suspected members of the anti-illegal drugs vigilante group Digos Death Squad (DDS) in Digos City on Sunday night. Police identified the victim as Antonio Edes, 43, an employee of the Provincial Engineer's Office, a resident of Emily Homes Subdivision. Edes, a suspected drug pusher, was the 12th victim of the vigilante group that started operating here last week of October.

Anthony Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Publisher ordered arrested

DAVAO CITY—An arrest order has been issued against the publisher of the tabloid Abante Tonite and two other staff members in connection with the libel charges that involved Davao City Rep. Prospero Nograles. Judge Isaac Robillo Jr. of the Regional Trial Court Branch 13 last week issued the arrest order against publisher Allen Macasaet, his editor Nicolas Quijano and reporter Bernard Taguinod who are facing 25 libel cases. Robillo set a P10,000 bond in each case or a total of P250,000 for each of the three accused. The three have been indicted for allegedly conspiring in the publication of the alleged malicious report concerning an incident in a Manila hotel where Nograles allegedly ran naked.

Anthony Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Child killer nabbed

TABACO CITY—Police arrested a suspect in the killing of a seven-year-old female Grade II pupil of the Tabaco South Central Elementary School a day after the brutal crime. Chief Insp. Nilo Berdin Jr., city police chief, identified the suspect as Jose Guerrero Jr., 24, a resident of Barangay Divino Rostro here. Guerrero admitted he committed the crime because he was drunk. The victim was found dead near the school's comfort room on Tuesday afternoon, with multiple stab wounds in different parts of the body and was undressed.

Job Belen, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Agrarian reform town

LEGAZPI CITY—Agrarian Reform Secretary Hernani Braganza recently launched the town of Malilipot, Albay as an agrarian reform community (ARC). Malilipot became the second municipal ARC in the Bicol Region (the other is in Irosin, Sorsogon) and the third in the country. Braganza also attended the Bayan-Anihan concert tour during his visit here in early December. Bayan-Anihan aims to raise consciousness on the latest effort to speed up the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program. *Job Belen, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Seminar on justice system

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—The city government recently held a two-day seminar on strengthening the pillars of justice system, aimed at upgrading the knowledge of city employees on the rudiments of handling criminal cases. Six professors from the University of the Philippines College of Law tackled issues including domestic violence, fact gathering and preparation and presentation of evidence. *Ruelle Albert Castro, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Water supply to ease up

CALAPAN CITY—Water shortage in this city will soon be alleviated once the newest well of the controversial Calapan Waterworks System and Development Corp. (CWSDC) becomes operational. Mayor Arnan Panaligan, however, said the non-issuance of an environmental compliance certificate by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources is preventing the water firm from operating its well in Bayanan I here. CWSDC's application for an ECC has been pending with the DENR due to the opposition of water rights activists who feared the operation of a well would deplete ground water in Bayanan. *Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

₱1.2B road project underway

CALAPAN CITY—The provincial government will start early next year, the construction of a road network that will connect the 11 towns of Occidental Mindoro. Gov. Jose Villarosa said the Japanese Bank for International Cooperation has made available some P1.2 billion "in soft loans" for the project. Villarosa said the project involves the rehabilitation and concreting of the Abra de Ilog-Mamburao Road, San Jose-Magsaysay Road and Mamburao-Sta. Cruz Road. *Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

22 hurt in cult amok

BUTUAN CITY—At least 22 persons, including four children, were wounded when a suspected member of the *Pulahan* cult group went on a hacking spree inside the Lipata Ferry Terminal in Surigao City early morning on Thursday.

Insp. Vimellee Reveche Madrid, spokesperson of the Caraga Police Regional Command said among those wounded were members of the Boy Scouts of the Philippines who were to attend the National Jamboree in Leyte.

Most of the victims were asleep at the ground and second floors of the ferry terminal and were waiting for the Lilioan-bound ferryboat to depart when Dalmacio Abad hacked them.

Madrid said Abad, 60, and a resident of Kabayanan, Bontoc, Southern Leyte was drunk. He even tried to resist arrest by Surigao City policemen.

It was not clear what drove the suspect to go berserk.

Madrid said laxity on the part of security personnel manning the port could be blamed for the incident.

"We really wonder how he was able to bring his (machete) inside the port. I think there were lapses in (the) security," Madrid said.

She said the police are still investigating the incident. ***Franklin Caliguid, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

Burnham family, friends press US for action to free couple

By ALEXANDER M. YOUNG
PDI Mindanao Bureau

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Apparently losing confidence in military officials who have repeatedly promised but failed to secure the freedom of American missionaries Martin and Gracia Burnham, the New Tribes Mission (NTM) and members of the Burnham family, have asked the United States to take an active role in securing their freedom.

A statement posted on the NTM website said representatives from the mission and relatives of the Burnham couple met with US government officials in Washington, DC on Thursday last week "to encourage the US government to press for action."

Among those who went to Washington to seek a direct US government intervention in the 7-month hostage incident were Paul and Oreta Burnham, Martin's parents and Mary Jones, Gracia's sister. The meeting was brokered by a congressional delegation from Kansas—the Burnhams' home state.

The NTM, the missionary institution where Martin works, described the meetings as "encouraging."

A source told the INQUIRER that some emissaries have already negotiated the release of the American couple to a third country, but it was aborted after the military deployed troops near the Abu Sayyaf encampment in Basilan.

Southern Command chief Gen. Roy Cimatu, who favors a military solution to the hostage crisis, has repeatedly expressed his opposition to a negotiation with the Abu Sayyaf group, which kidnapped the couple on May 27, along with another American, Guillermo Sobero, and a number of local tourists from Palawan.

Cimatu had said anyone "caught talking" with the bandit group would be arrested.

Cimatu, who earlier claimed his troops are closing in on the Abu Sayyaf hideout, said "the Burnhams will be home by Dec. 16."

But there was no sight of the couple even after the midnight Mass was over on that day.

A similar promise, saying the Burnhams would be released before Dec. 25, was also not fulfilled.

The NTM also reported that "thousands of petitions in the US alone" have been collected calling for the US government to take an active role in seeking freedom for Martin and Gracia.

The petitions were downloaded from the NTM website last week, with more than 450 more requested via e-mail.

The petition drive, initiated by Burnham friend Kathy Ryff, has also attracted responses from churches outside the US, including the Philippines, where the NTM has been active for decades now.

The petitions were presented to President Bush during the Thursday meet.

Martin and Gracia Burnham have been members of the New Tribes Mission since 1985, and have served in the Philippines since 1986. They have three children: Jeff, 14; Mindy, 12; and Zach, 11, all born in the Philippines. ***With reports from Julie Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

Cargo loaded with seized 'hot' rice missing

By JHUNNEX NAPALLACAN
AND DEBRA JANE MAGALLON
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—Customs officials in Cebu are in hot water over the "disappearance" on Christmas Eve of a seized cargo vessel loaded with confiscated smuggled rice worth P18 million.

MV Great Faith, owned by Sampaguita Shipping Lines, has been held at the privately owned Ouano Wharf in Mandaue City for three months after Customs officials ordered the vessel seized last Sept. 12 for carrying 18,000 sacks of smuggled rice.

Cebu Customs collector Roberto Sacramento issued early this month a release order in favor of the rice shipment's consignee, Searabbit Enterprises, but his decision was reversed on Dec. 12 by Customs Commissioner Titus Villanueva, who ordered the rice forfeited in favor of the government.

However, the cargo ship and its load of rice left port around midnight of Dec. 24, while the lone Customs police officer assigned to guard the vessel, Julius Ceasar Villarin, was away.

Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho yesterday said a fact-finding committee headed by Finance Undersecretary Cornelio Hizon will immediately conduct a probe to determine who should be held accountable for the unauthorized departure of MV Great Faith.

Camacho said he created the committee after President Macapagal-Arroyo ordered him to conduct an investigation. The President, he said, got mad after learning the vessel had disappeared as the seized cargo would have been given to the poor during this Christmas season.

Camacho said the fact-finding committee has one week to finish their investigation.

Camacho said several questions should be given answers in this investigation:

- Why did the Customs officials in Cebu failed to unload the rice and store it in a warehouse, considering that it had been held for three months;
- Who gave the order that the rice should remain in the cargo ship; and
- How was it possible that a huge cargo ship was able to leave port without anyone noticing its departure.

Camacho said all personalities involved in the seizure of the vessel and its cargo will be investigated, including Sacramento, even if he was still on leave during the Christmas holiday.

Villarin and other Customs policemen assigned to guard the vessel have been relieved of their post.

Villarin, however, said some of his colleagues and officials might have connived with the vessel's crewmembers to allow the cargo ship to leave port.

Villarin said he learned from another customs police officer that before the vessel disappeared, 18 sacks of rice were unloading on Dec. 16.

He said the unloading of the 18 sacks was negotiated between Sampaguita Shipping Lines and a Customs policeman who had guarded the vessel.

Villarin said he learned about the unloading of rice on Dec. 18 but he said he did not inform his superiors about it fearing that some of them were also conniving with the smugglers.

He said he suspected that some of his superiors might be involved because they did not assign another police officer to watch the vessel. He said he should have a replacement after an 8-hour duty but he instead reported to work for 24 hours.

Villarin said he had been on a 24-hour duty on Dec. 23. On the 24th, he said he left the port area around 10 a.m. and went home to change his clothes. He said he went back to the Ouano Wharf at 4:30 a.m. of Dec. 25 but the vessel was already gone.

Villarin asked authorities that he given security as he planned to disclose more information about the involvement of some Customs officials in smuggling.

Presidential Liaison officer for the Visayas Elberto Emphasis recommended on Wednesday to President Macapagal-Arroyo that the incident required a thorough investigation, noting that it was the second incident of a mysterious disappearance of a cargo ship containing confiscated items.

Gloria unveils rockslide shield on Baguio highway

By VINCENT CABREZA
AND DESIREE CALUZA
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

TUBA, Benguet—President Macapagal-Arroyo unveiled on Thursday an experimental public works shield that could stave off perennial rockslides, which have made traveling to Baguio City perilous during the rainy months.

Ms Macapagal, who is on a weeklong working holiday in Baguio until New Year's eve, rode through the 327 meter-long Marcos Highway rock shed in deep shadow, as thick afternoon fog darkened the highway stretch.

She was accompanied by Highways Secretary Simeon Datumanong, Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo and representatives of the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), which funded the P516.95-million rock shed.

The rock shed was originally introduced for the century-old Kennon Road by Japanese engineers following the devastating 1990 Luzon earthquake, but the technology was instead piloted along the Badiwan Section of the 41.7-km Marcos Highway and on a stretch of the Vizcaya Highway.

Visitors often access Kennon Road, which is the shortest route to the city, although the official mass transport routes to date are the Marcos Highway and Naguilian Road.

The rock shed is designed as a cushion of concrete, steel and sand, which would theoretically "absorb the energy created by the impact of falling rocks or boulders weighing three tons, and which fall from a height of 12 meters."

On the surface, it is built like a series of box culverts with a minimum vehicular clearance of 5.37 meters.

Its most intriguing facility is a sand-based cushion that should stand the rigors of falling boulders.

The Badiwan Stretch had been the site of some of the worst traffic accidents in the last two decades, accounting for four of 10 vehicular accidents occurring in a given year on roads leading to Baguio, Tuba officials noted here.

Skeptical

But civil engineers remain skeptical about the technology.

In fact, it was heavily criticized during a 1999 symposium on geo-technical engineering conducted by the Philippine Institute of Civil Engineers Inc. (PICE), documents obtained by the INQUIRER showed.

The most basic concern raised in that conference involved the absence of Philippine regulatory and technical specifications that would guide its construction based on Filipino engineering standards, a PICE Baguio member told the INQUIRER.

"We wanted to be certain about the parameters because we were not sure the government was using the same Japanese standards because of the cost involved. *Baka tinipid iyan* (Government may have cut corners)," he said.

A paper introducing the rock shed to the PICE acknowledged these policy lapses.

Lapses

"There are no guidelines from (the Department of Public Works and Highways) applicable to this particular type of structure. However, seismic load on the structure must not be ignored or treated lightly . . . as the consequence arising from the failure of the rock shed can be more severe than those of bridge failure," wrote Angel Florendo, one of the engineers who helped modify the technology for the Marcos Highway.

DPWH consultants designed a leveled roofing for the rock shed composed of a heavy line of polyethylene sheets that cover a 100-millimeter-wide lean concrete and a thick layer of sand as cushioning material.

Florendo's paper also detailed structural ground conditions in Badiwan, which demanded certain innovations, such as the mountainside's foundations and the uncontrolled drainage problem along this part of the mountain range.

YEAR-ENDER

The year that was Mindanao

BY THE PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

MANY good things happened in the island in the year 2001, but they were overshadowed by the magnitude of violence, natural calamities and more violence.

At the forefront of the violence was the Abu Sayyaf, a ragtag group of armed men operating in Western Mindanao.

The Abu Sayyaf, after having made cash out of their hostages for the year 2000, started the year with a kidnapping in Dipolog City, Zamboanga del Norte province on March 29.

At 4:30 p.m. that day, seven bandits abducted at gunpoint a young lady-lawyer and her five-year-old daughter.

Maria Dolores Montano-Liong, and her daughter Alexa, became the 4th batch of kidnap victims in Zamboanga del Norte since 1993. They were released on June 20.

On May 22, Abu Sayyaf leader Nadzmie Saabdulla led a daring attack at the Barcelo Pearl Farm in Samal Island in Davao del Norte, which was then teeming with foreign and local tourists.

Saabdulla, widely known as commander Global, failed to snatch a single victim but his group killed at least three resort employees, before fleeing to Davao del Sur on board a fishing boat.

While authorities were hot on trail of Saabdulla's group in the mountains of Malita and Don Marcelino in Davao del Sur, another Abu Sayyaf faction, led by Aldam Tilao stormed the Dos Palmas Beach Resort in Palawan on May 27 and abducted several persons, including three Americans.

On June 2, at 12:15 a.m., the self-styled Tilao, also known as Abu Sabaya and bandit leader Khadaffy Janjalani brought the 21 Dos Palmas hostages inside the St. Peter Compound in Lamitan, Basilan.

There, they engaged the military in what was to be known as the Lamitan snafu.

The bandits were heavily surrounded but they were able to escape unharmed.

The incident led Fr. Cirilo Nacorda to charge some military officials of conniving with the Abu Sayyaf.

In July, the campaign against the Abu Sayyaf was taking form.

Commander Global, who served as spokesman for the bandit group during the Sipadan hostage crisis in 2000, was arrested along with four Abu Sayyaf members.

The Pentagon

As the Abu Sayyaf was still hogging the headlines because of the Dos Palmas hostages and the beheading of American Guillermo Sobero on June 12, another kidnap-for-ransom group, said to have connections with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, abducted a Chinese national working on the much-delayed P2.7 billion Malitubog-Maridagao Irrigation Project in Carmen, Cotabato.

The Pentagon, led by Faizal Marohombsar and Mayangkang Saguile, demanded $20 million for the freedom of Zhang Zhong Quiang, an engineer with the China Import Export Technologies (Citec).

When the kidnappers settled for less, Zhang's coworkers, including his brother Zhang Zongyi went to Columbio, Sultan Kudarat in August to hand over the P5-million cash to the kidnappers.

Instead of freeing the original captive, the Pentagon held the couriers. Two of them, Xue Xing and Zhang Zhongyi were killed in the middle of an encounter.

Zhang Zhong Quiang was later freed by the Pentagon, but the group staged more kidnappings including those of Libungan, North Cotabato rice trader Martina Martin on Nov. 4; of Italian priest Giuseppe Pierantoni from Dimataling, Zamboanga del Sur on Oct. 17; and of Canadian Pierre Belanger from Digos City in Davao del Sur on Nov. 3.

And in Boomtown General Santos City, the Pentagon also spread its wings.

Since March, three kidnapping incidents hit the Tuna Capital of Mindanao, the latest of which was that of Dr. Josefina Montecillo, just as Christmas was filling the air on Dec. 1. She was released three days after.

Belanger, on the other hand, was released on Dec. 23, shortly after Martin was freed, but Pierantoni remains in the hands of the Pentagon.

Other violent events

On Aug. 28, the uncanny calm in Lanao del Sur was broken when armed men shot to death the parish priest of Malabang town.

Fr. Rufus Halley, an Irish missionary loved by both the Muslim and Christian residents of the town, was trying to fend off a kidnapping attempt, which apparently irked his would be abductors.

On Oct. 28, Zamboanga City, already in the middle of a fear from terrorist attacks, was rocked by an explosion near the city's biggest mall. Four people died from that blast, while 40 others were wounded.

On Nov. 19, some 200 followers of renegade Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) governor Nur Misuari simultaneously attacked military detachments in Sulu. More than 100 people were killed in that incident.

On Nov. 27, residents of barangays Sta. Maria, Pasonanca and Cabatangan in Zamboanga City, were awaken by heavy explosions that targeted the Cabatangan Complex of the defunct Lupong Tagapagpaganap ng Pook IX.

Inside the Complex were some 500 followers of Misuari, who repeatedly rejected appeals from government officials for them to vacate.

As the military intensified its assault, Misuari's followers, led by his nephew Julhambrie, held more than 100 residents hostage.

The hostages, including children, were freed after 31 hours of negotiations. Misuari's men agreed to free their captives in exchange for a safe conduct pass to their choice of destination.

In Davao City, killings of suspected drug pushers by a suspected vigilante group started to intensify shortly after the May 14 elections.

At least 15 people were killed as the alleged Davao Death Squad went after them one after the other.

Not even minors were spared by the vigilante group in the city, which was dubbed as the Most Child-Friendly City in the country.

Most people suspected that Mayor Rodrigo Duterte is behind the DDS, although he denied it at every opportunity he could get.

While the police was still clueless as to who are behind the DDS, a similar group, known as the Digos Death Squad began its operations in Davao del Sur.

As of Dec. 25, the said vigilante group has felled at least 17 people.

SOLDIERS scour the Basilan jungles for the Abu Sayyaf. FILE PHOTO

Old newsmakers

Norberto Manero Jr., who gained notoriety when he killed Italian priest Tulio Favali in 1985 escaped on March 22 from his prison cell at the Sarangani Provincial Jail.

Once again, Manero, the most hated Kumander Bucay of the Ilaga vigilante group, stole the limelight.

On April 9, exactly 18 days after he bolted from his prison cell, Manero surrendered to the government.

In Zamboanga del Norte, convicted child rapist Rep. Romeo Jalosjos also emerged from the "drawer" when he was reelected on May 14.

His opponents accused him of engaging in massive vote buying to get the voters' approval.

After the elections, he was on and off the limelight, but made news again after the Supreme Court affirmed his conviction for raping an 11-year-old girl in 1997, on Nov. 16.

In Ozamiz City, the alleged former chief of the dreaded Kuratong-Baleleng Gang became a favorite news material when he won the mayoralty race last May 14.

Parojinog, who led the anti-Communist group in the early 90s, anchored his campaign on anti-illegal drugs.

Ironically, some members of his group are said to be behind the thriving shabu industry in the city and in Misamis Oriental.

On Sept. 5, former mayor Jose Libayao of Talaingod town in Davao del Norte once more landed in the news, but it was not the continuation of his 1997 campaign against the New People's Army, but his death from the hands of suspected rebels.

Libayao, was representing his wife Pilar, the town's new mayor, in a meeting when alleged NPA rebels abducted and killed him in sitio Cabadiangan, Barangay Sto. Niño in Talaingod.

On Nov. 12, the NPA stormed communications facilities in Mawab, Compostela Valley and razed the relay stations of Dole Philippines and three of the country's major telecommunication firms.

The rebels blamed the companies' failure to pay revolutionary taxes as the reason for the burning.

A few days after the attack, the NPA ambushed a convoy of government troops, killing at least 18 soldiers.

A subsequent military operation in nearby Cateel, Davao Oriental killed some 25 rebels.

The renewal of the rebels' activities in Davao Oriental led Mandaya leaders to form their own anti-Communist organizations.

In November, they trooped to the provincial capitol in Mati town to ask the provincial government for more arms and bullets.

Disasters

Nature unleashed its fury when several calamities hit some parts of Mindanao.

On Aug. 11, at least 31 people were killed while 17 others were missing when flash floods hit five towns in Zamboanga del Norte. Damage to agriculture and infrastructure facilities reached P120 million. Environmentalists said the wanton cutting of trees in the hinterlands of the province was one of the contributing factors in the flood.

But perhaps, the Camiguin tragedy on Nov. 7 has no equal.

At least 150 people, mostly from Mahinog town, were confirmed dead when Typhoon Nanang stirred a powerful whirlwind and floods in the island.

By far, the Camiguin tragedy, which also damaged more than P200 million in infrastructure, can be considered the most terrible disaster that hit Mindanao in years.

Not even the collapse of the walls of Lake Maughan in South Cotabato in 1995 could equal the calamity, not only because of the magnitude of the damage but also because it affected one of Mindanao's 'paradise' destinations.

Politics

As early as August, majority of Mindanao residents were already debating whether there was need for them to be included in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

While the issue was clearly about the proposed autonomy, most people could not detach themselves from the anti-Muslim bias that has gripped the island for decades now.

Fr. Eliseo Mercado, a prominent peace advocate, was quoted then as saying that the elections should be postponed because most people did not understand the importance of voting 'Yes' to the proposed expansion, as they were too gripped with the fear of being ruled by Muslims.

On Nov. 26, this assessment was proven correct, when only five of the 14 provinces and one city from among the 10 cities proposed for inclusion in the ARMM voted Yes.

Majority of residents in areas that did not want to be under the ARMM, were Christians.

With the ARMM elections over, politicians again stirred controversy when they moved to transfer the regional center of Central Mindanao to Koronadal City.

The move followed an executive order issued by President Macapagal-Arroyo, which said that under the new realignment of administrative regions, Central Mindanao will be known as Socsargen (South Cotabato-Sarangani-General Santos) Region and its seat of government should be in Koronadal City.

Some 3,000 employees of government agencies in Cotabato City, the former seat of Central Mindanao, said their families would be dislocated because of the transfer.

In Misamis Occidental, the Subanen tribe finally became a force to reckon with and gave a swing vote during the May 14 elections.

In Don Victoriano town, the Subanens comprised 90 percent of the population while in Concepcion, they account for 95 percent.

During the polls, they fielded an all-Subanen slate in the two municipalities, through the group Pieksalabukan Pagbanwa sak Misamis Occidental.

Tribal leaders claimed the proverbial guns, goons and gold, brought the defeat of their candidates but at least, it taught some politicians a lesson or two.

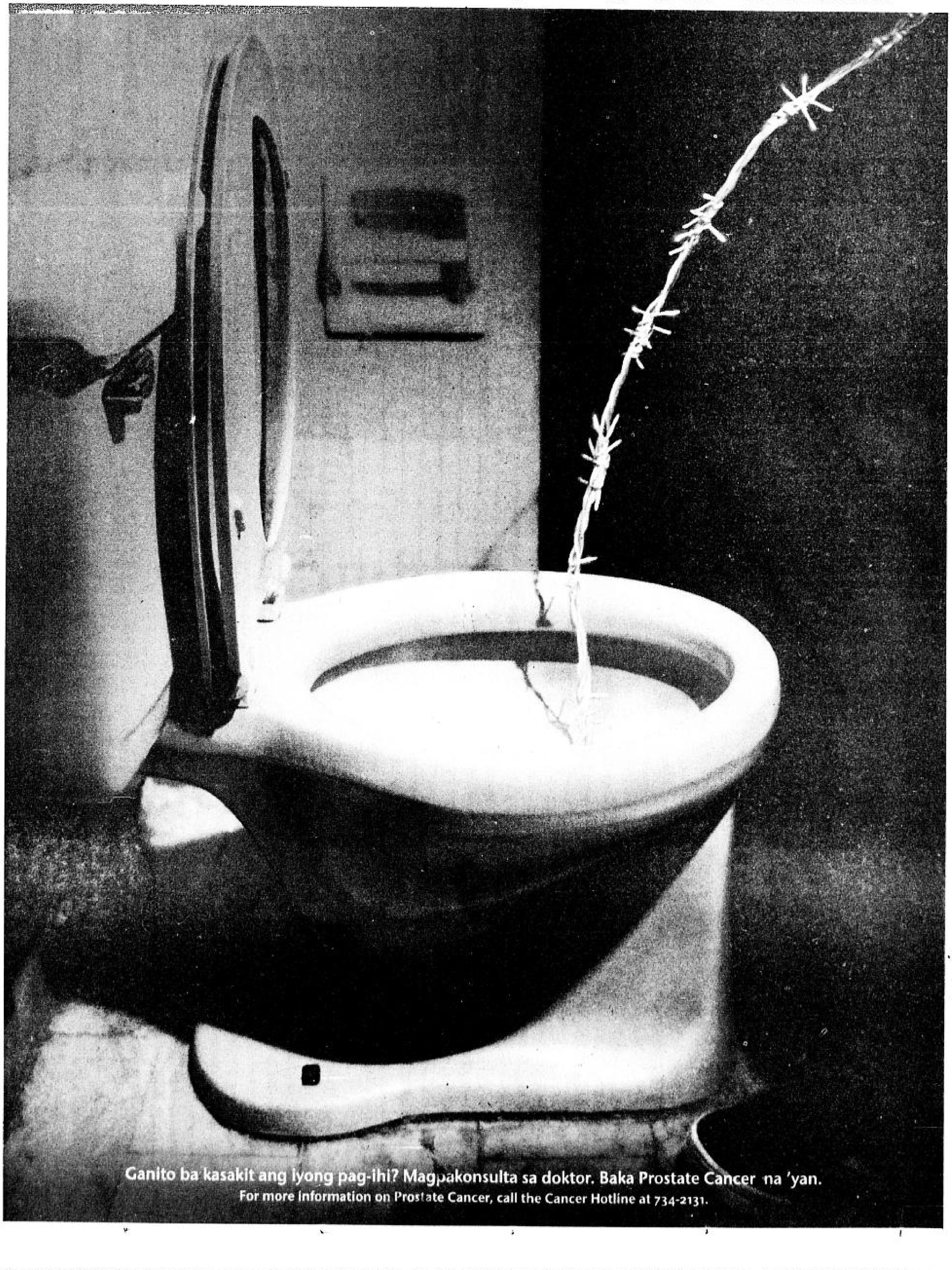
Ignored

On Nov. 11, a very important event in Mindanao started to unfold in Lanao del Norte, but perhaps, because it did not feature any violence, the national media failed to take notice of it.

Even its historic value (Lanao del Norte was where President Joseph Estrada started his all-out war against the MILF) was apparently ignored but with or without the media mileage, the First Mindanao Friendship Games went on.

Designed as a sports-for-peace program by the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC), the Games held in Tubod, Lanao del Norte ran up to Nov. 15.

It gathered more than 2,000 athletes from 45 local government delegations including Jolo. *Hernan de la Cruz, Ellen Red, Butch Enerio, Grace Cantal-Albasin, Rosa-May de Guzman, Lullie Micabalo, Anthony Allada, Aquiles Zonio, Edwin Fernandez, Charlie Señase, Alexander Young, Noralyn Mustafa, Ayan Mellejor, Ryan Rosauro, Ferdinand Zuasola, PDI Mindanao Bureau*



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INQUIRER Visayas
JUN BANDAYREL, Editor ■ EDRALYN L. BENEDICTO, Bureau Chief

Visayas casts a wary eye on 'green tide'

BY JUAN L. MERCADO
Mactan Island, Cebu

A "GREEN tide" phenomenon is emerging in this island, as well as in parts of Bohol. But it has not appeared on a large enough scale to set the alarm bells ringing in other parts of the Visayas--for the moment.

MACTAN Island swimmers frolic amid "green tide" weeds. Nuisance or future economic products?

"Green tide" is the tag given to an explosion of what Visayans call "*lumot.*" It's an algae that scientists call ulva.

The Japanese dust it, as powder, on fish crackers, or on their local pizzas peddled as "okonomiyake," Greeks use it, as an indicator, to track metal pollution in gulfs like Thermaikos.

But some Filipino resort owners swear, the weed, which blooms in inter-tidal zones, is a costly pain-in-the-neck. They must sweep mounds that wash up on their otherwise pristine beachfronts.

Marine biologists, at Cebu City's San Carlos University (USC), say ulva has sub-groups. But it is unlike the more notorious "red tide" which contaminates seafood.

"Red tide" or toxic algal blooms have become more common in the past 20 years, acquiring a regional spread, the Asian Development Bank and United Nations reveal in "State of the Environment in Asia and the Pacific."

Polluted rivers and chemical run-off from industries erupt into "red tide" the ADB/UN report says. "Major outbreaks (have occurred) in Australia, China, New Zealand, the Philippines and Korea."

But no one is sure, so far, whether the green version is a pest or a blessing. Studies of the "green tide" in the Philippines are just starting, says Dr. Danilo Largo, head of USC's biology department.

In fact, the authoritative journal "Hydrobiologia," published in the Netherlands, has come out with Largo's preliminary study on the "green tide" in the Visayas.

Murky issue

In the Central Visayas, green tide has been documented to occur in two places in Mactan Island: Barangay Ibo, flanking the International Airport and Hadsan Beach Resort.

The port of Tagbilaran, in Bohol, also has a record of seasonal outbreaks. But evidence on "green tide" in the famed resort island of Panglao remains anecdotal, the USC study notes.

On this island, "green tide" erupts regularly in Magellan Bay, the study says. Waters in this area are highly eutrophied by sources from Cebu harbor, and from a river fronting the bay.

In addition, major Cebu City rivers, like Guadalupe, Butuanon and Mahiga are "biologically dead" due to pollution, a Department of Environment and Natural Resources study points out.

"Effluents from households and industrial firms, discharge directly into rivers and streams, and are likely to exacerbate this bloom," Dr. Largo adds.

At a USC study station, on Mactan's mid-eastern side, waters are flushed by the tidal current from the open sea of the straits fronting Bohol. Its relatively pristine waters are protected from Cebu harbor's and run-off from the main island.

But during northeast monsoons (especially in January) "green tide" erupts, even in Mactan's mid-eastern side. Wave-cast materials--plants mainly in their young vegetative state--cause nuisance to swimmers. Blooms increase dramatically between December to March--just when tourists fleeing winter come to the Visayas.

Green tide adds up to the maintenance cost of cleaning beaches, Dr. Largo admits. And it can foul up swimming as biomass decays.

But the fact remains that ulva are edible seaweeds--if your tastebuds are to go Japanese. And they offer potential as organic fertilizers. But as the USC biologists are first to admit: Green tide remains a murky issue for the Visayas today.

'Madame Butterfly' by Ilonggos

BY HAZEL P. VILLA
Iloilo City

NO ONE stripped at the showing of "Madame Butterfly" composed of an all-Ilonggo cast and crew and yet the performers got a standing ovation in one of performances held on the last week of November at the CAP Auditorium here.

Disabusing themselves of memories of "M Butterfly" the play that saw the cross-dressing lead stripping to the barest essentials, Ilonggos from all walks of life went home relishing the 2-hour sophisticated Italian sound bytes of "Madame Butterfly" the opera by Giacomo Puccini.

The opera has a Japanese female lead in a *kimono*.

The last time "Madame Butterfly" the opera was performed in Iloilo City was about fifty years ago at the Colegio del Sagrado Corazon de Jesus and now here comes the Arts Council of Iloilo Foundation successfully pulling off an ambitious project as part of its educational program.

Kevin Piamonte, the director, even wrote, "We must be mad doing an opera." But judging from the superlatives used by the audience and national and local music critics, the council's "madness" was more than compensated.

The audience paid P75, P100 or P200 to watch an opera about Cio-Cio San, a Japanese geisha who married Col. Benjamin Pinkerton, a US naval officer. He leaves her with a promise of coming back, not knowing that Cio-Cio San has borne him a child. She discovers he has remarried and kills herself, leaving her child called "Sorrow."

Members of Koro, a chorale group from the University of San Agustin and other Ilonggo guest artists sang the arias in Italian as it was during "Madame Butterfly's" premiere in Feb. 17, 1904 at Milan, Italy.

In tears

A local paper quoted Ingrid Sala Sta. Maria, founder of the Cebu Peace Philharmonic Orchestra, as saying that she was in tears when Asela Labaro as Cio-Cio San sang "Un Veldi," the most familiar aria.

Leonor Orosa Goquingco, national artist for dance and also a music critic for a national daily, said she was very impressed with the production as well as the powerful and emotive voices of the performers.

Accompanying the opera singers on the piano and organ were musical director Gerardo Muyuela and nationally acclaimed pianist Corazon Pineda-Kabayao who is also the executive producer and costume designer.

The process of staging "Madame Butterfly" the opera was the product of two other successful performances as well as the art council's desire to "bring higher forms of music and theater to all Ilonggos."

Piamonte said they decided to do "Madame Butterfly" after Koro's successful performance of Mozart's "Requiem" earlier in the year and the art council's national tour of Leoncio Deriada's "Panayanon: The Epics of Panay."

"The encouragement we got from the reviews of 'Panayanon' was the one that clinched the idea of doing an opera," said Piamonte.

The cast of "Madame Butterfly" held rehearsals for more than two months. Piamonte said it was "unsettling to work in the Italian language, but eventually, the language was melted by the music."

Nightly rehearsals were held at the Kabayao family residence in Molo District.

Violinist and Ramon Magsaysay awardee Gilopez Kabayao acted as musical consultant in tandem with his wife Corazon and Muyuela.

All praises

The Kabayaos and Piamonte were all praises for Koro. "We are very fortunate to have Koro. Without their exceptional talent, we would not have made it," said Piamonte.

Such an ambitious production had its supporters. Taken by the "madness" of the production were other musicians, theater people and even Iloilo's old rich such as Lopez scions Fernando "Junjie" Lopez and his cousin Mian Lopez Zayco who raised the morale of the performers at a technical rehearsal days before the show.

Corazon Pineda-Kabayao said at the Nov. 30 performance that the production of "Madame Butterfly" was particularly significant locally because it has drawn the support of civic groups such as the Panay Council of Lions Clubs Presidents, one of its sponsors.

Corazon Kabayao noted in an interview that the success of musical and cultural shows were partly due to the strong support of the city's prominent citizens and the dedication of the artists themselves.

Full circle

Corazon said "Madame Butterfly" is but a product of more than a decade's perseverance by the Iloilo Arts Council Foundation that first started lifting the level of cultural shows in Iloilo by inviting guest artists from Manila.

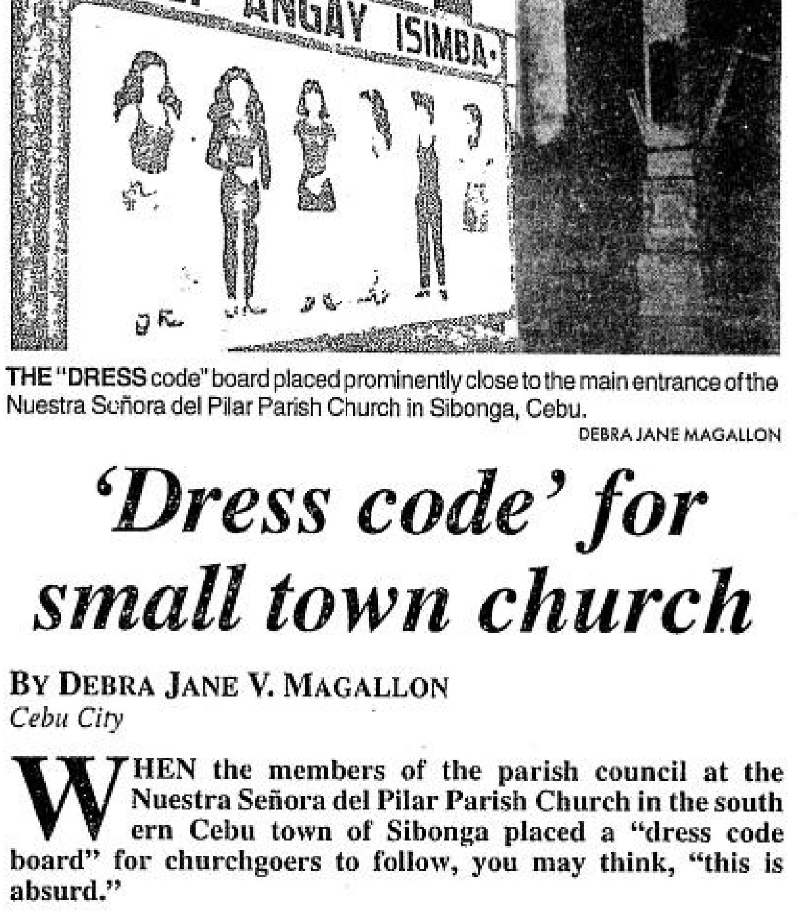
This was followed by workshops. Now, Iloilo's artists are going full circle by mounting their own productions done by all-Ilonggo casts and crews.

Corazon said the Iloilo Arts Council Foundation was invited by arts groups in Davao to perform four musicals there, including "Madame Butterfly."

Then, there is Chinggay Jasareno, director of the Cultural Center of the Philippines' Cultural Outreach and Exchange Program telling Corazon that the impressive "Panayanon" should be brought to international festivals.

One can only surmise with a hint of thrill of other possible cultural and musical surprises which the Iloilo Arts Council Foundation would pull off, with Corazon saying, "After doing an opera, we can do anything else."

SOME members of the cast and crew whoop it up at the Kabayao residence during rehearsals and a pictorial.



THE "DRESS code" board placed prominently close to the main entrance of the Nuestra Señora del Pilar Parish Church in Sibonga, Cebu.
DEBRA JANE MAGALLON

'Dress code' for small town church

BY DEBRA JANE V. MAGALLON
Cebu City

WHEN the members of the parish council at the Nuestra Señora del Pilar Parish Church in the southern Cebu town of Sibonga placed a "dress code board" for churchgoers to follow, you may think, "this is absurd."

But for them, it's not. The parish council is serious that the rules are implemented to the letter: No short skirts or sleeveless blouses while in church.

Many may ask how the parish leaders will enforce the rule.

Even Fr. Antonio Quintana, the newly installed parish priest of the town, also asked the same question.

"The board was already there when I first came," he said. That was last August. Knowing it would be unwise not to support the decision of the parish's lay leaders and many of its parishioners, Father Quintana thought hard and said to himself: "At least we are trying (to require churchgoers to wear decent attire while attending the Mass)."

Bringing back modesty in dressing for churchgoers may be quite hard to achieve, especially in this age when people are not as conservative as circa 1800.

Father Quintana, after a while, did try to make the parish council let go of the dress code. But "they (the lay leaders) are willing to stand at the entrance of the church with veils and overcoats for those who would (come in for the Mass wearing clothes that) violate the code."

Actually, the huge board that showed what constitutes inappropriate garments when attending a Mass was first placed near the church entrance in 1987. During that time, the parish was not serious in implementing the code. Eventually, the "dress code" board was removed and landed a spot in the church's stockroom.

Bigger version

In 1999, however, a new and bigger version of the dress code board reemerged. It was placed closer to the entrance and where every churchgoer could clearly see it.

Still, no strict compliance from the churchgoers was deemed necessary. It was just there, serving the purpose of reminding the people that the church is a holy place.

And like the first time, the board was later removed. But it emerged for the third time this year.

This time, the dress code board was brought back upon the request of the members of the Marian Movement who belong to the parish church. The officers of the parish council then decided to launch a campaign to strictly enforce the dress code.

"(The dress code) will be included in the policies to be drafted by the parish council in January next year," said Rogelio Mendez Sr., an active member of the council.

Mendez also told the INQUIRER that this campaign would be part of the advocacy of the parish's Education Ministry to educate churchgoers on the proper way of dressing when going to church.

Besides, as lessons on Catholic faith have taught us, modesty is one form of temperance—for one to refrain from what may lead to unlawful pleasures.

There are still a number of churchgoers who violate the dress code, especially some young people influenced by the dictates of fashion. But surprisingly, Father Quintana said many of the parishioners who are wholeheartedly supporting the drive to enforce the dress code are from the youth sector of the parish.

Requiring appropriate attire while attending the Mass is nothing new. This reminder has been included in numerous circulars in Catholic churches all over the country. But few have made the rule clearer than the parish council of the Nuestra Señora del Pilar Parish Church.

For the lay leaders of the parish church what many might perhaps consider as old-fashion is a priceless value of modesty and decency.

There is no guarantee that the efforts of the parish council and the youth lay leaders will get full cooperation from the churchgoers. The Church, after all, does not turn away anyone who comes to the House of God.

But as Father Quintana has put it, "at least we try."

More jobs in 2001 as economy exceeds growth targets

The country will rely more on the local market and build on domestic demand to counter the ill effects of a global economic slowdown on employment.

This is the strategy of the administration to keep people on the payroll and create more opportunities to employ Filipinos.

Even as President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo received a report from the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) that the unemployment rate has gone lower this year, she expressed concern that many forecasters say that the US economy will only start a gradual recovery from recession by the second half of 2002.

DOLE reported that the country's unemployment rate declined to less than nine percent as of October this year.

This was lower than the two-digit rate in 2000.

The administration, the President said, will work closely with the private sector to keep domestic demand healthy despite the low growth in exports.

Local purchasing activities in agriculture, housing and in small and medium enterprises could help sustain activities in the local economy and keep workers employed.

In January-July this year, agriculture increased employment rate by 11.4 percent to 11 million. The increase was from 9.9 million jobs a year ago.

One of the major measures to help many workers to remain or get back on the payroll, the President said, was to retrain, upgrade or learn new skills. These skills are those needed by companies

The information and communications technology sector, for instance, offers new employment opportunities.

The labor department has also stepped up its efforts to resolve faster labor disputes through peaceful and amicable settlement between management and unions. This means that strikes and layoffs are avoided.

DOLE is also on a marketing campaign to improve the share of Filipino overseas workers in the employment markets of Europe, the United States, the Middle East, Taiwan and Singapore.

Many US recruiters are on the look out for Filipino professionals in the areas of IT and medical services.

HOUSING and Urban Development Coordinating Council Chairman Michael Defensor turned over to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo the recommendations and action plans for the housing sector during a national summit on housing and urban development.

No longer squatters in their own country

More than 150,000 families may no longer be considered squatters in their own country.

These families were provided shelter security - the right to own lands, loans to build homes and the opportunity to move out of the slums to resettlement sites - from January to October.

Barely months after President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo pledged to vigorously pursue efforts to provide shelter to the homeless, particularly the underprivileged sector of the society in her State of the Nation Address (SONA), the government already exceeded its target of 150,000.

"We worked double time and we already exceeded the target because for this year, our goal is 150,000 urban poor families who will be given the right to buy their lots. But as of today, we have already achieved 250,000," the President said.

In his yearend report on the accomplishments of the housing sector, Housing and Urban Development and Coordinating Council (HUDCC) Secretary Michael Defensor said the government's desire to keep the housing sector moving is not only a matter of economics or politics but rather, a matter of need.

Defensor also reported that from January to October this year, the housing sector has provided shelter security to 178,428 low-income households belonging to the formal and informal sectors which represents 59.48 percent of the overall target.

"Three-fourths, or 118,723 households were provided with shelter security through Presidential Proclamation," he added.

Since January when she took over the helm of government, President Macapagal-Arroyo has proclaimed 17 public lands as "alienable and disposable," paving the way for eventual ownership of lots by those currently living in these areas.

FOREX reserves reach $14.8-B despite lower exports

The country's foreign exchange reserves have reached A$14.8 billion despite lower-than-expected exports caused by a global economic slowdown that was triggered by the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the $14.8 billion foreign exchange reserves registered by the end of November "is 1.3 times the short-term debt based on residual maturity."

According to Buenaventura, "continued inflows of direct and portfolio investments supported the stronger-than expected balance of payment (BOP) level."

He attributed the success to the BSP's timely move to "provide liquidity, smooth out volatility and ward off speculation."

Buenaventura likewise noted that the government's flexible policy has allowed "external shock absorption," enabling the Philippine peso to remain stable despite the adverse impact of the Sept. 11 attacks on the global economy.

Prudent monetary policy, the BSP governor explained, was among the main reasons the government was able to achieve its inflation target of 6-7 percent.

The country's inflation rate from January to November reached only 6.3 percent, well within the target.

Buenaventura said the BSP is determined to maintain the low inflation rate in the year ahead, adding that a strategy has already been drafted to accomplish this goal.

He expressed confidence that the BSP would contribute greatly to maintaining low inflation with its firm commitment to price stability, its independence and its improved reporting for transparency and accountability.

Railway Transit system eases traffic congestion

What is the President's strategy to ease traffic congestion on the Edsa, one of Metro Manila's main roads?

One medium-term solution government is working on now is to close the loop of the mass railway transit system.

"That will reduce the traffic," President Macapagal-Arroyo said, "because you can get on anywhere and get out anywhere just using the mass railway transit system."

Recently, the Cabinet approved the construction of a light rail transit that would run for about 12 kilometers from Baclaran, Parañaque to Bacoor, Cavite.

Cavite commuters can then get on and off conveniently using the light rail transit system in Baclaran or the Taft MRT terminal in Pasay.

The Cavite LRT will link Baclaran with Sucat in Parañaque on or before 2004, and Imus and Dasmarinas in Cavite on or before early 2005.

The long-term, strategic goal is to decongest Metro Manila by dispersing business activities outside the metropolis, according to the President.

Metro Manila would become Mega Manila, with people able to travel faster through commuter systems going North and South.

North would be business centers like the Subic and Clark special economic zones. South would be industrial estates in the Calabarzon provinces and the Batangas Port.

In the meanwhile, the President herself occasionally gets caught in traffic. But that does not stop official business.

"You ask all my Cabinet members," she said. "That's the time when I'm on the phone with them anyway. So it's very productive for me."

PRESIDENT Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo presides over a meeting with Metro Manila Development Authority officials on local problems in the metropolis. Among those attending the meeting are (from left) Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, Interior and Local Government Secretary Jose Lina, Jr. and MMDA Chairman Benjamin Abalos.

Moratorium on politicking is big challenge hurled by GMA

Adopting a moratorium on politicking, even for one year, will be a big challenge for 2002. With partisan and personal interests out of the way, the poorest of the poor would gain the most.

Bottlenecks for a competitive economy are being cleared. But strides can only be sustainable if there is focus by the administration and the opposition on working for the common good.

The challenge next year is to stop political bickering and rise above partisanship so that we can sustain our growth and development.

Business, labor and civil society themselves have echoed and supported the President's call for a one-year moratorium.

This is because they share the vision of a healthy economy that provides for people's needs.

According to the President, "every initiative, every new measure or program to which we have committed ourselves is a building block for the broader pillars of a national strategic consensus."

The four pillars are:

1.) a competitive economy able to build wealth in a more interactive global setting

2.) a caring society that ensures the building of wealth is interlinked with equity for Filipinos

3.) a robust agricultural sector matching the global benchmarks of efficiency

4) modern institutions of public and corporate governance maintaining globally accepted standards of accountability and transparency in a secure, rules-based society, free from fear and confident in the effective enforcement of laws.

P-$ exchange rate stabilizes

The peso continued to strengthen against the US dollar as market conditions stabilized toward the yearend. On Dec. 21, the exchange rate averaged at P51.15-US$1.00, significantly lower than the peak of P53.928-US$1.00 on July 18.

Earlier, the exchange rate experienced depreciation pressures due to the volatility in regional currencies and concerns about the peace and order situation. The slowdown in the major industrialized economies after the September terrorist attacks in the United States also contributed to the peso's volatility.

However, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) implemented a wide range of measures that helped stabilize the movements of the peso. These measures include the expansion of the coverage of the Currency Risk Protection Program, reduction of the ceiling for undocumented over-the-counter purchases of dollars; and the increase in banks' liquidity reserve requirements.

Conditions in the foreign exchange market are seen to improve further as the recovery in the global economy next year is expected to spur export growth and encourage more foreign investments. Increased foreign investments are also expected as investors react positively to improving macroeconomic fundamentals, the administration's market-friendly structural reform agenda and greater political stability in the country.

Arroyo wars on terrorism

On global and domestic terrorism, President Macapagal-Arroyo has been a staunch enemy and critic.

Her policy against the dreaded Abu Sayyaf terrorist group is resolute and uncompromising.

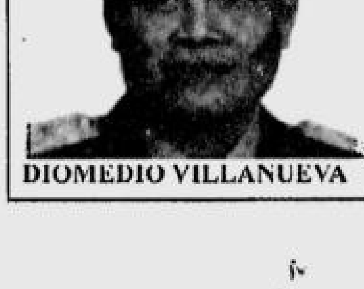
Since May, government forces have captured a number of ranking leaders and troops, killed numerous guerillas and freed a number of hostages taken from a Palawan beach resort and other places.

The President has also persuaded the National Democratic Front (NDF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) to sit down with government representatives at the negotiating tables to discuss prospects for a just and long-term peace.

The government and the New People's Army are currently observing a 30-day ceasefire.

Peace negotiations with the NDF are scheduled to resume in January.

President Arroyo was also the first Asian leader to call President George W. Bush after international terrorists attacked the World Trade Center buildings in New York City and the Pentagon complex in Arlington, Virginia.



DIOMEDIO VILLANUEVA

ANGELO REYES

She pledged immediate support to any campaign the US would undertake against terrorists and expressed deep sympathies over the agony of the bombing victims and the American people.

President Arroyo took the leadership at the conference of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in Brunei for ASEAN to issue a statement supporting the US-led campaign against global terrorism.

She took a similar initiative at the summit of the Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in Shanghai.

The Philippines is prepared to contribute troops to a peacekeeping mission in Afghanistan under the auspices of the United Nations, she said.

Presidents Arroyo and Bush pledged during their November meeting to help crush the Abu Sayyaf depredations and end domestic terrorism in the Philippines.

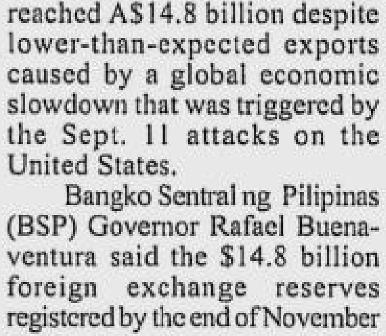
President Bush expressed deep appreciation over Mrs. Arroyo's strong support for the alliance against international terrorism as he pledged economic and military assistance to Manila worth $2 billion.

Good gov't cornerstone of GMA economic policy

The government has taken significant steps to promote good governance.

The red tape that the business sector complains against as encouraging corruption and discouraging investment is being cut down.

For example, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo said that the Department of Public Works has started to implement computerized bidding.



THE PRESIDENT stressing a point during radio-TV interview

"(This) takes out the human element and substitutes it with fairly incorruptible artificial intelligence," the President said. "The result has been not just honest but faster contract awards."

Another important step toward good governance is penalizing money laundering.

The law against money laundering seeks to discourage international crimes by the drug trade abroad and graft and corruption at home.

Several departments are also computerizing operations of their frontline services.

This shortens time in processing and delivering services to the public.

The National Bureau of Investigation, for instance, is issuing renewal of NBI clearances in less than a day.

Companies registering their projects with the Board of Investments will soon get action on their applications within 10 days from 20 days.

The Departments of Trade and Industry and the Interior and Local Governments are now surveying businessmen on how they rate the quality of services by city and provincial executives.

With the rating, there would be a basis to grade the competitiveness of one city with a city.

Residents would be able to prod their executives, for instance, to take steps to lower the costs of doing business if their towns or cities are to compete with other locations in attracting investors.

The businessmen to be surveyed are members of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Analysis will be done by the Asian Institute of Management.

Guidelines, procedures or requirements for transactions with agencies, such as renewal of passports with the Department of Foreign Affairs, are now posted on their websites.

ADVT.

Let US troops rescue Burnhams, Kansas lawmaker urges GMA

(From page A1)

rescued soon. The couple has three children. Martin Burnham's parents hail from Kansas.

"The Burnhams have been there for seven months, going on eight. They are physically weakened," Tiahrt said.

"I have spoken to their parents and they think something needs to happen or they are afraid the couple will perish. It is a matter of timing now," he said.

The Burnhams, originally from Kansas, were abducted from a resort in Palawan on May 27 along with 18 other people, some of whom were later released, reportedly in exchange for ransoms.

But the Philippine and US governments have refused to pay for the release of hostages, arguing such a move would only encourage more kidnappings.

The Abu Sayyaf has killed one US hostage, Californian Guillermo Sobero, and more than a dozen Filipino captives.

The US and Philippine governments have linked the bandit group to Osama bin Laden, the main suspect in the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in the United States.

The US government has sent teams of US military advisers to train Philippine troops hunting for the Abu Sayyaf in Basilan.

Tiahrt said his call on Ms Macapagal had the blessing of Paul and Oreta Burnham, Martin Burnham's parents.

"They have encouraged me to go and try to get President Macapagal-Arroyo to invite our troops in," he said.

IS this any way to give technical assistance to Filipino soldiers? That's what the US say as its soldiers reportedly train Filipino troops to hunt down the Abu Sayyaf terrorists. DENNIS SABANGAN

State Department official

After meetings in Manila, Tiahrt, who will travel with a Marine colonel and state department officials, will fly to Mindanao, and hopes to get a first hand look at Basilan, where Philippine troops have reportedly pinned down the kidnappers.

He said he was confident that he would be safe, despite heading for an area which the state department has repeatedly warned Americans to avoid.

"I feel completely safe. I am willing to take whatever risk there is. I think it is very minimal but after speaking with the parents of Martin and Gracia, I just think that it is time to get them freed and right now we haven't seen any progress."

The congressman said that he hoped to be taken to Basilan by Philippine troops. But he said he would probably have to be content with a flight over the island as the area was dangerous.

Deadline

Tiahrt launched his mission after the Philippine military failed to beat a self-imposed Christmas Day deadline to rescue the Burnhams.

About 7,000 soldiers have been dispatched to Basilan to hunt down the Abu Sayyaf but the rough terrain and thick forests have slowed them down.

Army chief Lt. Gen. Jaime de los Santos, who visited Basilan, said the Abu Sayyaf had been cornered.

"The latest is that (our troops) have been able to limit them to one area. . . unlike before when they covered a large ground," De los Santos said in Filipino.

"Our troops have been able to identify the area and they have concentrated their forces," he added.

Presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao said government forces had pinpointed the area where the hostages were being held but had resisted bombing amid concern over the captives' safety.

He said that if the current military campaign against the Abu Sayyaf did not work, the Macapagal administration would adopt a new strategy, which involves "both military and something that would win their hearts and minds."

He did not elaborate.

Training

Starting January, Filipino troops will start getting training in counter-terrorism from American advisers.

The advisers have started arriving in Zamboanga City. They will conduct the training in a camp being put up in the area.

The US troops are members of a mobile training team of the US Pacific Command.

"They would be bringing in additional helicopters with night-flying capability... and they would also be giving us advanced thermal imaging equipment to upgrade our night operations," Brig, Gen. Emmanuel Teodosio said in Filipino.

Teodosio, deputy chief of staff for the military's education and training, said the US team would also bring in ground transport equipment.

Lt. Gen. Roy Cimatu, Southern Command chief, told defense reporters that the American advisers "are setting up their communications facilities at the Southcom headquarters in preparation for the training of our troops by the middle of next month."

He said the Army's Light Reaction Company, which had been trained by US troops in Nueva Ecija, would get additional training.

"This time, it will be done here in Zamboanga," Cimatu said.

The military has yet to decide on the name of the training facility.

For now, it is being called the "War Fighting Facility," according to Teodosio.

He said Filipino troops would be trained on night-fighting, intelligence-gathering techniques and maintenance of new equipment.

The arrival of the US advisers came almost a month after another team of American troops observed how the Armed Forces of the Philippines conducted its operations against the Abu Sayyaf. *AFP and Martin P. Marfil*

RP, Malaysia, Indonesia sign draft accord on terrorism

THE PHILIPPINES, Malaysia and Indonesia yesterday agreed on a draft accord to fight terrorism and transnational crimes after a two-day meeting at the Dusit Hotel Nikko in Makati City.

But the officials of the three countries did not discuss the case of renegade Moro National Liberation Front leader Nur Misuari, according to Undersecretary Lauro Baja Jr. of the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Baja said while the proposed agreement was intended to establish a framework to facilitate closer cooperation among the three countries, Misuari's case was never discussed.

"We have discussed some actual cases and some hypothetical cases. For example, we have some actual cases on piracy, illegal trafficking of women, illegal entry but we did not discuss the case of Misuari," Baja said.

The meeting was attended by senior foreign affairs and defense/security officials from Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. The meeting was chaired by Baja. Brunei and Thailand sent observers to the meeting, Baja said.

The draft document calls for a system to determine how the countries' security forces can collaborate to confront border crime.

Foreign ministers of the three countries are to debate and possibly sign the document in their annual meeting in Phuket, Thailand, early next year.

It also calls for the creation of a joint committee to report on implementation of the accord and communicate to their respective superiors.

The accord and possible areas of cooperation include crimes such as terrorism, money laundering, smuggling, piracy, hijacking, illegal migration, marine pollution, arms trafficking and other crimes.

Baja said the countries also tentatively agreed to draft and distribute among each other a list of terrorism suspects to watch out for.

As an example of the necessity of such an accord, Baja cited last year's kidnapping of 21 Western tourists and Asian workers in a Malaysian resort by Abu Sayyaf guerrillas. All but one of the hostages were freed reportedly after huge ransoms were paid.

Piracy and drugs and arms smuggling are rampant in the three countries' border areas, generating funds that could be used to finance further terrorism. Smuggled arms have also found their way to troubled areas of the three countries.

It was still not clear in the draft precisely how the three countries would quell a particular security threat in their common border area.

Such security cooperation would benefit the Philippines partly because of its weak military. It is currently getting some training and equipment from its longtime ally, the United States, to destroy the Abu Sayyaf guerrillas, who hold hostage an American couple and a Filipino nurse in southern Basilan island.

Philippine officials, who drafted the accord, hope other Southeast Asian countries will later join the anti-terrorism effort spearheaded by the three countries, which are founding members of the 10-nation Association of Southeast Asian Nations. ***Reports from Christian Esguerra and AP***

Cops nab Jordanian; al-Qaida links eyed

(From page A1)

bombing.

He has lived with his family in Balanga since early 1995. He is married to a Filipina.

The arrest of Alghoul foiled a plan to launch a series of bombings in the country next week, according to Chief Supt. Reynaldo Berroya, Central Luzon police chief.

"He certainly has strong links with Bin Laden, (prime suspect in the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States)," Berroya told the INQUIRER by phone from Baguio City.

He said "Alghoul is a member of one of the terrorist cells in the Philippines assigned to carry out next week a string of bombings in Metro Manila."

The explosives seized from Alghoul were enough to destroy a building, according to Berroya. "Hopefully, we were able to seize the bulk of the explosives from him," he said.

Alghoul's arrest came two days before the first anniversary of the bombings in Metro Manila that left 18 persons dead and more than a hundred others injured.

Since early this month, PNP chief Director General Leandro Mendoza has ordered intelligence officials to intensify their monitoring of terrorist groups to prevent a repeat of the bloody bombings.

Berroya said the arrest was the result of months of intelligence work.

Bank withdrawals

He said Alghoul had been under close watch during the last four months. Every Thursday, the Jordanian withdrew a huge amount of money from a local bank.

Alghoul sold underwear and maintained a small store at the Recar Market here.

During the raid on his home, operatives reportedly seized from Alghoul three travel bags containing 281 sticks of emulite explosive dynamite and three Nokia 5110 mobile phones, one of which was attached to a 9-volt wire.

Taliban poems

Also seized were a brown envelope with 35 sheets of documents in Arabic and Taliban poems translated into English.

These were found hidden in the ceiling of Alghoul's rented apartment at Barcarse subdivision in Capitan 3, Cupang North.

The documents in Arabic have yet to be translated.

Palad said the search by a team of 30 operatives from Camp Olivas and Camp Tolentino was made on the strength of a warrant issued by Executive Judge Benjamin Vianzon of the Bataan-Zambales Regional Trial Court.

Alghoul, who is in his 50s, was arrested in the presence of village officials.

Alghoul was taken Thursday night to Camp Olivas where he underwent intensive questioning for his links with Bin Laden.

Police are hunting down other Middle Eastern men believed to be Alghoul's companions.

So far, the Bureau of Immigration at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport has no record of Alghoul's arrival in the country, an immigration intelligence officer said. The officer went over records from December 1999 up to the present.

Alghoul was also not in the bureau's file on suspected terrorists.

Police have alleged that associates of Bin Laden—Ramzi Yousef, Abdul Hakim Murad and Wali Khan Amin Shah—traveled to the Philippines in 1995 to plot the killing of Pope John Paul II and plan bombings of US airlines and an attack on CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia.

All three were convicted of a failed plot to bomb commercial airplanes.

Murad was arrested in Manila in January 1995 after fire broke out in an apartment he shared with Yousef, the alleged mastermind of the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center that killed six people and injured 1,000 others. Yousef was later captured in Pakistan. ***With a report from AFP***

Chilling signs show Osama not spent force

(From page A1)

But in a telling comment on how elusive Bin Laden has proved, a senior defense official revealed that since the United States started its attacks on Afghanistan in October, its forces had never come close enough to finding the Saudi-born radical to attack his location.

The United States never had "actionable intelligence," or information that could be acted on immediately, on Bin Laden's whereabouts since launching its military campaign in Afghanistan on Oct. 7, the senior defense official said.

"If there had been, we would have gotten him," said the official, who asked not to be named.

Pakistan has sent troops and paramilitaries to its porous 2,400-km Afghan border and has arrested hundreds of Bin Laden supporters trying to cross. It has handed 20 of them back to US Marines in Afghanistan, the Pentagon said.

Bin Laden tape

In a videotape released by Qatar's al-Jazeera television station on Thursday, Bin Laden told the United States that it would soon collapse, whether he lived or died, as Muslims around the world had "awakened" to its tyranny.

Al-Jazeera had first aired excerpts on Wednesday of the 34-minute-long message, in which Bin Laden said the West held an "indescribable amount of Crusader loathing for Islam."

The channel said Bin Laden's videotape was mailed from Pakistan but had lain unopened on a secretary's desk for two days before someone noticed it on Wednesday.

It did not say how it got the tape or when or where it had been shot, though the channel's anchor said it could have been recorded in the Muslim holy month of Ramadan as Bin Laden was swallowing constantly.

Muslims refrain from eating and drinking from dawn to dusk during Ramadan which ended on Dec. 15.

"We say that the end of the United States is imminent, whether Bin Laden or his followers are alive or dead, for the awakening of the Muslim umma (nation) has occurred," Bin Laden said.

Missile attack

NBC Nightly News reported a shoulder-launched, anti-aircraft missile was fired at a group of four helicopters ferrying the commander of the US campaign, General Tommy Franks, to the inauguration of new Afghan leader Hamid Karzai on Saturday.

Quoting military sources, the network said Franks' helicopter had been forced to take evasive action but that the missile "was several hundred feet off target."

Neither the Pentagon nor US Central Command would comment on the report.

In war developments, US planes destroyed a compound overnight believed to be used by leaders of Afghanistan's fallen Taliban militia near Ghazni, southwest of Kabul, the Pentagon said.

At least two B-52 bombers and one AC-130 gunship destroyed the high-walled complex using precision and non-precision bombs, Pentagon spokesperson Admiral Craig Quigley said.

Air Force Gen. Richard Myers, chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told reporters there were "very good indications the compound was inhabited by Taliban leadership."

He was unaware of reports from the area that up to 40 villagers had been killed in a US nighttime bombing raid.

"The attack took place when the people were asleep," said one tribal source, quoting witnesses from Naka village.

Cuban detention

In Washington, Rumsfeld said Thursday that the U.S. military will hold Taliban and al-Qaida detainees at a Navy base in Cuba, but has no plans to use it as a site for military tribunals.

In a Pentagon briefing, Rumsfeld described the base as the "least worst place" to hold the detainees, suggesting there are few options for imprisoning the men once they are in US custody.

He said it could take weeks to prepare the site, at Guantanamo Naval Base, which the United States controls.

"We don't anticipate any trouble with Mr. Castro," Rumsfeld said when asked whether he thought Cuban President Fidel Castro would object.

So far, 45 prisoners are in US custody and are being questioned about the whereabouts of alleged terrorist Osama bin Laden and to determine if they should be brought to trial.

Twenty suspected al-Qaida fighters who fled the area of eastern Afghanistan where Bin Laden may have been hiding were transferred Thursday to a US Marine detention center in Kandahar, Afghanistan.

The Marines were already holding 17 prisoners there and another eight, including the American John Walker Lindh, were being held on the helicopter carrier USS Peleliu in the Arabian Sea. *Reuters, AP*

ABS-CBN lays off 150 workers

(From page A1)

ents have agreed to pay cuts to help the network weather uncertainties next year.

At least 29 employees, including reporters, an editor, and production assistants, were given their walking papers six days before Christmas, according to a report from the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE).

ABS-CBN cited redundancy and company reorganization as the reasons for the retrenchment, which will take effect on Jan. 27, according to DOLE records.

Both regular employees and talents are becoming restive, following a less than satisfactory cash gift given to the talents who do not get the mandatory 13th month pay. (A talent can be a reporter, writer, executive producer, cameraman or driver who works for the company without a contract. They don't receive benefits.)

Talents, who make up 70 percent of the network's 5,000 employees, have started organizing to press for demands that range from regularization to a larger Christmas bonus.

The ABS-CBN employees union has also demanded the recall of the termination notices and suspension of the streamlining program until consultations have been made.

Lower ad minutes

In a statement, ABS-CBN said advertising minutes fell by up to 15 percent in October and November compared to the same period last year. The company traditionally gets the highest ad revenue in the fourth quarter.

ABS-CBN said the decline in ad minutes, which has been observed since July, was due to the general weakness in consumer demand that forced major clients, particularly in the "packaged goods" industry, to cut advertising expenses.

The company noted that these clients spent heavily on advertising despite a weak economy in the past to gain market share.

"Total media industry value is expected to shrink by as much as 30 percent this year," ABS-CBN pointed out.

P500-M budget cut

To meet the challenges of a markedly changed business environment, ABS-CBN said it planned to cut operating expenses by 15 percent or as much as P500 million in 2002.

The measure involves reducing manpower by an initial 3 percent, slashing production expenses and exploring ways to make production operations efficient.

ABS-CBN and its subsidiaries employ more than 5,000 regular staff and talents, the largest in the broadcasting and entertainment industry.

ABS-CBN will limit capital expenditures to P1 billion next year. The company is depending largely on internally generated cash to support operations next year.

Drop in net income

In documents filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, ABS-CBN reported that its net income in the third quarter dropped 29 percent to P435.52 million from P614 million in the same period last year.

A 16-percent increase in operating expenses to P2.08 billion and a five-fold increase in interest expenses to P121.2 million weighed down on its profit despite a 5-percent increase in net revenue to P2.86 billion.

From January to September, ABS-CBN's earnings declined 19 percent to P1.39 billion compared with the P1.647 billion in the same period last year.

A 23-percent increase in operating expenses dampened the 15-percent increase in net revenue during the period.

"A large part of the expansion in subsidiary-related costs was due to ABS-CBN International as well as the consolidation of Studio 23, which impacted particularly on the first semester of 2001, and ABS-CBN Interactive, which was in pre-operating stage prior to this year," ABS-CBN said.

The company noted that its compensation and benefits had been above industry standards. "(B)ut with the global crisis brought about by the Sept. 11 bombings, ABS-CBN had no recourse but to reevaluate its operations."

"This move is being implemented for the overall financial health of the company as well as the welfare of all its employees and stockholders."

ABS-CBN said it would "properly compensate and offer redeployment and business opportunities, if any," to those affected.

Union not amused

ABS-CBN vice president for human resources Maribel Salta said the company would provide separation play plus options on how and where to invest their money, entrepreneurial skills training so that they can start their own small businesses and job opportunities in other companies.

The union is not amused.

In a letter to ABS-CBN executives dated Dec. 26, union president Pablito Manalo protested the terminations, saying the management has already agreed to meet with the union on Jan. 3.

"Such precipitate and uncalled for action on the part of your . . . departments in furnishing our members with termination notices and pushing through with your retrenchment program even before our agreed meeting concerning the same is a clear sign of bad faith," Manalo said.

Stop retrenchment

"We demand that you immediately . . . hold in abeyance the implementation of any retrenchment . . . otherwise we will be compelled to take all necessary and appropriate actions to protect our members," he said.

Besides the editorial, administrative and maintenance personnel who were fired, talents face cuts in their fees following management's order to executive producers of current affairs programs to reduce their budget by 30 percent.

A producer, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said vice president for current affairs Arlene de Castro called a meeting early this month to announce the order from the top brass.

Replay episode

The producer said management gave them three options: retrench some of their staff, cut their budget by 30 percent, or replay an episode every month.

The source said the company initially wanted them to reduce their budget by half but conceded to a 30-percent cut when producers were alarmed by the proposal.

"They have always asked us to be considerate of the company's financial condition, and we have been considerate, but they owe it to us to tell us what's going on," said another producer. "Should we start looking for work?"

"It's very difficult to work thinking that you could be the next person, who will walk out of the station with nothing," said a talent who has been with ABS-CBN for almost a decade.

Terminated regular employees will receive separation pay, but talents will get nothing.

The disgruntled employees said the management did not even explain the basis for the cash gift given to them, which went as low as P700.

Cash gifts in previous years were equivalent to twice the monthly salary without exceeding P15,000.

"The employees are demoralized," a source said. "You learn of new people pirated from another station getting so much, and yet they're terminating regular employees and maybe talents next," the source added.

The union and talents, who are still unorganized, are drafting separate plans of action to address the management's cost-cutting scheme.

"We've been here for so long, and we never agitated them but I think we have to do something now. We can't go on not knowing what will happen to us tomorrow," a talent said.

Channel 2, meanwhile, still led its competitors with a 45-percent average audience share and ratings of 19 percent, more than the combined total of all free-to-air competitors. This, however, was before the impact of such game show hits as "Who Wants to be Millionaire" and the "Weakest Link" was fully assessed.

The print media is also feeling the economic downturn. Pinoy Times, a tabloid put up by Eugenia Apostol, ran its last issue on the third week of this month.

A broadsheet, the Manila Meteor, is seeking new investors to avoid closure.

SPORTS ON TV COMPILED BY LORENZO MANGUIAT

POOL: World Pool League 2001 at 12 noon (r – 8:30 p.m.) and midnight on ESPN

BASKETBALL: NBA Inside Stuff at 11 a.m. (r - 9 p.m.) on Star Sports

NBA - Toronto Raptors vs LA Lakers at 11:30 a.m. (r – 6:30 p.m.) on Star Sports, Miami Heat vs Atlanta Hawks at 2:30 p.m. (r) on ESPN

AMERICAN FOOTBALL: NFL Yearbook 2000 - Tampa Bay Buccaneers at 2 p.m. (r) on ESPN

SPORTS

AL S. MENDOZA, Editor ▪ EDWIN M. VILLANUEVA, Assistant Editor

BLAST FROM THE PAST

TODAY in 1989, Teddy Danay clocked 1 hour, 6 minutes and 23.08 seconds to rule the 20-km 2nd Ramon Durano Sr. Memorial half-marathon in Danao City. Also today in 1993 Jayson Gonzales beat Johnny Corrales in 34 moves of a King's Indian Defense to post his fourth win in the Metropolitan Chess Club non-Masters chess tournament at the Harris Memorial Compound on Taft Avenue.

BRIGHT PROSPECTS IN 2002

MBA alive and kicking; Dick Gordon in

PBA yearend shocker: 4 SMB teams

WHEN San Miguel Beer won the All-Filipino Cup, the Beermen appeared ready for a second PBA Grand Slam since it first did it in 1989.

But as fate would have it, the Beermen lost the last two conferences won by Red Bull and Sta. Lucia Realty, respectively.

Batang Red Bull bullied San Miguel in the Commissioners Cup while Sta. Lucia Realty defeated the Beermen in the Governors Cup.

But as the year draws to a close, San Miguel has emerged the sure winner-outside the hardcourt, that is. The company now owns four teams in the PBA.

But that's going ahead of the story.

The Thunder thus became the fastest squad to win a championship, winning its first in only five conferences in the league. The Realtors tasted their first title in nine years with the league.

Reinforced by former Duke University standout Antonio Lang, the Thunder won their last two battles with the Beermen in a best-of-seven affair that broke a 2-2 series' standoff and shattered San Miguel Beer's dynasty.

Trying to recoup, the Beermen reacquired Lamont Strothers, engineer of San Miguel's back-to-back Governors Cup victories.

But Sta. Lucia Realty, determined to avenge its loss to the Beermen in the 2000 Commissioner's Cup Finals, deflected SMB's bid anew.

Import Damien Owens blended well with Dennis Espino, Marlou Aquino, Paolo Mendoza, Gerard Francisco and Chris Tan to beat the Beermen in Game 6 of their historic battle as Sta. Lucia captured the season-ending Governors Cup.

Tan's title-clinching shot with 3.3 seconds left in Game 6 was a fitting anniversary gift to his stepfather, Sta. Lucia coach Norman Black. Black won his 10th coaching crown in 14 championship appearances.

Black, who won nine titles as SMB coach, shares 10 crowns with Alaska coach Tim Cone as the second winningest coach after Dalupan, who had 15.

In a yearend shocker, Tanduay sold its franchise to FedEx.

Before that, SMC bought Purefoods, making the franchise the owner of four teams in the league as it had also acquired Pop Cola. *June Navarro*

Wilt ...

NBA NOTES

Henry Liao

THE LATE Wilt Chamberlain was the architect of the highest scoring Christmas season in NBA history.

From Dec. 16-29 in 1961, Chamberlain scored at least 50 points in seven consecutive games to establish an NBA record.

The 7-1 mastodon opened his Christmas binge with a 50-pointer during the Philadelphia (now Golden State) Warriors' 112-110 road triumph against the Chicago Packers on Dec. 16.

Three days later, Wilt torched the Cincinnati Royals (the predecessors of the Sacramento Kings) with 57 markers in a 117-110 success.

Next victims were the Detroit Pistons, who wound up on the shorter end of a 117-102 rout on Dec. 20 as Chamberlain collected 55 points.

Christmas Day of that year was also an explosive moment for Chamberlain as he pumped in 59 markers against New York. But his effort went for naught because the Knicks secured a 136-135 win in double overtime.

The following day, Wilt waltzed to another 51-point blitz as the Warriors bounced back to register a 118-111 victory over the Syracuse Nationals (the harbinger of the Philadelphia 76ers).

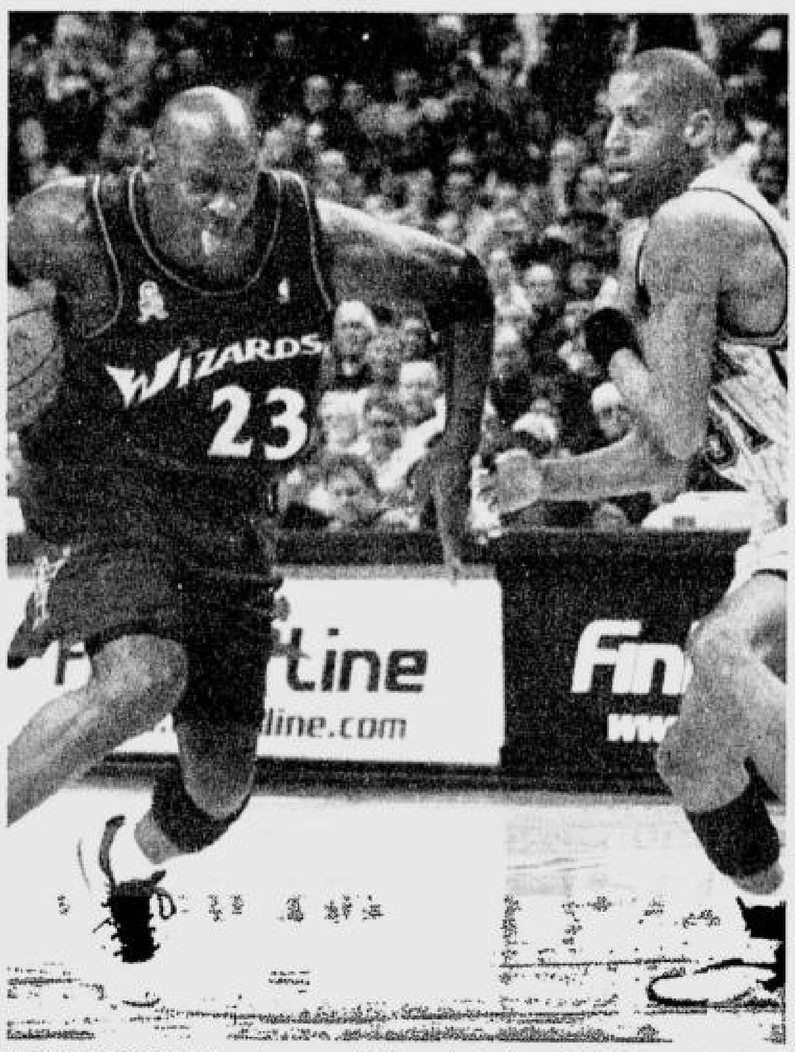
Chamberlain reached the 5-point plateau for a third night in a row on Dec. 27, gaining 53 markers in a 131-119 shellacking of the Knicks. It was a payback for a stinging defeat to New York a couple of days earlier.

The climax of Chamberlain's NBA-record streak of seven consecutive 50-point games came on Dec. 29 when he torched the LA Lakers for 60 markers in a 123-118 success.

This capped Wilt's most successful 14 days of Christmas in his storied NBA tenure. During the seven-game stretch, he averaged 55 points per game as the Warriors went 6-1.

The 50-point streak was snapped on Dec. 30 when Wilt managed "only" 41 markers in a 116-111 overtime defeat at the hands of arch nemesis Bill Russell and the Boston Celtics.

Chamberlain, who died of congestive heart failure on Oct. 12, 1999 at the age of 63, saw action with the Philadelphia-San Francisco Warriors in his first five seasons (1959-64) in the NBA. He was peddled to the Philadelphia 76ers in January 1965 before another trade sent him to the LA Lakers in July 1968.



WASHINGTON Wizards guard Michael Jordan (left) drives the lane past Indiana Pacers guard Reggie Miller during their second quarter game in Indianapolis yesterday. The Pacers won, 108-81. AP

BY ROY LUARCA

JUST three weeks ago, the MBA appeared headed to its death throes. Yesterday, it was business as usual.

No less than Tourism Secretary Dick Gordon is about to join the league with his Olongapo squad.

After worrying about dwindling membership and funding, league honchos are now having a hard time choosing from a horde of franchise aspirants for the two slots still available. Olongapo and Pampanga have taken the first two seats to be vacated next year.

Santi Araneta, chair of the Multi-Regional Board Inc., has told the Inquirer that the MBA isn't about to fold up. He said the entry of Olongapo, to be backed by Gordon and Olongapo City Mayor Kate Gordon, is a "done deal."

To be known as the Olongapo Volunteers, the team will also be used by the DOT as endorsers for its domestic tourism program.

Pampanga, the MBA inaugural national champion in 1998, will now be supported by Lubao Mayor Dennis Pineda. The Dragons will be using the franchise of the Manila Metrostars.

Fighting it out for the other seats are Taguig, under Mayor Freddie Tinga; Laoag City, Pasig, to be supported by Regent Foods; Spring Oil, owned by father and son national shooters Tom Ong and Tac Padilla and Pangasinan.

Other teams which have sent feelers are Laoag City, to be supported by Ilocos Norte Gov. Bongbong Marcos; Makati, under former vice mayor Edu Manzano, and Quezon province.

Araneta, who owns this year's MBA national champion LBC Batangas Blades with brother Dino, said the MBA is inclined to limit the field to eight teams to ensure balanced and quality competition.

With the reported departure of ABS-CBN, which has subsidized the MBA teams the past four years, the MRBI composed of the team owners will now take charge of financing and handling the teams.

Araneta said the opening of the MBA's fifth season is tentatively set first week after the Holy Week.

As to the application filed by 2000 MVP Romel Adducul in this year's PBA draft, Araneta said Adducul merely wants an assurance that he'd be getting the best deal available.

"I'm willing (to let him go) if it would be for his benefit," said Araneta. "But I presume that he'd like to stay with us (Blades) all things equal."

For a while, the MBA was rocked by uncertainty after 2000 national champion Andok's San Juan took a leave of absence and FedEx Laguna brought the franchise of Tanduay in the PBA. Financial woes have also forced Socsargen and Nueva Ecija to take a leave of absence, leaving LBC Batangas, Cebuana Lhuillier, Negros and TPG Davao as the active franchises.

With the entry of new teams and the return of crowd-drawer Pampanga, MBA director for marketing and business development Ramon Tuason said the league will assume a fresh look next year.

Adducul, De Ocampo join draft

ROMMEL Adducul, Yancy De Ocampo and Chris Clay. One of them might yet end up the top pick in the PBA Annual Draft on Jan. 13 at the Glorietta Center in Makati City.

Adducul, the MBA's most dominant inside operator from the Batangas Blades, 6-foot-9 De Ocampo of Welcoat Paints in the PBL and the Fil-American Clay of the Laguna Lakers yesterday beat the deadline along with 80 aspirants yearning to play in the 2002 PBA season.

De Ocampo has joined his fellow PBL players Renren Ritualo, Chester Tolomia, Miguel Noble, Dexter Racho and Rency Bajar in the draft.

Other applicants are Eric Canlas, Jojo Manalo, Eugene Tan, Celino Cruz and Brandon Sison of Welcoat Paints; Ateneo-Pioneer's Rainier Sison, Leo Avenido and Edrick Ferrer; Gilbert Lao, Aries Dimaunahan and Jacques Gottenbos of Montana; and La Salle's Alvin Castro.

La Salle's Mike Cortez, one of two amateur aspirants in the PBA-backed national team for the next year's Asian Games, Omanzie Rodriguez of the San Juan Knights and Jeffrey Flowers of Laguna have also joined the draft. *June Navarro*

Wind Blown to run last race

WIND Blown, already a cinch to bag Horse of the Year honors, closes out the 2001 racing calendar today with one final start in the P1.67 million Philracom Classic Open Championship.

Local racing's all-comers challenge race is set at the Santa Ana Park.

Having won seven consecutive races since his romp in the PCSO First Gentleman's Silver Cup last April, the multi-titled four-year-old colt guns for the P1 million.

Already, Wind Blown has won a whopping P10.8 million.

Five locally bred colts and one US-bred galloper are set to take Wind Blown's challenge in the featured Classic Open.

The challengers include Presidential Golf Cup runner-up Batangas Entry, High Roller, Lyonnais, Sparkling Sky, Staunch Ally and imported mare Sun City (USA), the last horse to have beaten Wind Blown in an actual race.

"This race is our own way of expressing our gratitude to our race fans and the industry's major stakeholders," said Philracom chair Andrew A. Sanchez.

"This is an opportune occasion to celebrate PRCI's unprecedented achievement of reaching the P3 billion sales mark," said PRCI executive vice president and chief operating officer Ramon Ereneta Jr.

RACING TIPS

AT SANTA ANA
BY MR. 999

Race 1—1. Jessie James 2. Dixie Dancer 3. Tigre 4. Silver Lining

Race 2—1. Real Dancer 2. Men of Honor 3. Mahdi's Gold

Race 3—1. Super Dancer 2. Gold Prosperity 3. Golden Child 4. Cara Bambina

Race 4—1. Bull Dancing 2. El Campeon 3. Champs Elysees 4. Royal Vic 5. Nyora Aiding

Race 5—1. Holywood Park 2. Regal Mischief 3.Senor Roggoes 4. Bumper to Bumper

Race 6—1. Ilocos Queen 2. Runaway Bride 3. Notable 4. Talk to Patsy 5. Miss Slowoen 6. Very Sharp

Race 7—1. Wind Blown 2. High Roller 3. Lyonnais 4. Batangas Entry

Race 8—1. Golden Eagle 2. Bound to Be 3. Legend of Gaia 4. Gemstone 5. Sereno

Race 9—1. El Duque 2. Power Pack 3. Sheer Courage 4. Good Grace 5. Chief Navigator

Race 10—1. Burning Light 2. Art of Rose 3. Pankim

Race 11—1. Rapid Strike 2. Pistol Red 3. Full Show 4. Machine Gun Kelly 5. House Conquest

Race 12—1. Bidang Bida 2. Mrs. Big 3. Blockbuster 4. Silent Wind

Race 13—1. Black Force 2. Guts Pleaser 3. Sexy Royal 4. Aresbee 5. May's Magic

Race 14—1. Boomerang 2. Bahenya 3. Green Leaves 4. Lady Victoria 5. Spoiler 6. Flying Fortress

Orteza wins Milo's 14-under

MELISSA Orteza defeated Julie Em Botor, 6-4, 6-2, yesterday to capture the girls' 14-under title in the 2001 Milo Junior Tennis Cup and Regional Workshop at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

In the boys' 18-under division, Ian De Guzman beat Patrick John Tierro of Holy Infant Jesus College-Olongapo, 6-4, 7-5 to advance in the finals against Yannick Guba of St. Benilde-Bacolod, who scored a 6-0, 6-2 victory over Jandrick de Castro of La Salle-Greenhills.

In the boys' 14-under class, Arithmetico Lim of Chiang Kai School outclassed Ed Angelo Diez of Davao, 6-1, 6-2 to forge a title showdown with Hamza Macapendeg of Cotabato City, a 6-0, 6-1 winner over Bryan Deo Dayleg of Colegio de San Agustin.

Earlier, Leyan Moncera of Olongapo City defeated Patrick Arevalo of Ilocos Norte, 6-1, 6-4 and Christian Canlas of Ateneo conquered Johnwill Baldonado of Colegio de San Agustin, 6-0, 6-4 to reach the boys' 12-under finals in this netfest organized by the Children's Tennis Workshop and supported by Adidas and Sports Kids.

Archery's Lim elected Asian 1st VP

ARCHERY president Ramon A. Lim has chalked up another honor for the Philippines off the field when he was elected first vice president of the Asian Archery Federation in Hong Kong.

A former three-time FITA (International Archery Federation) council member, Lim also earned the distinction of being the first international official to be named FITA emeritus judge.

Hong Kong Yu of Korea was re-elected president during the recent AAF Congress in Hong Kong.

LIM

Also elected were Sanguan Kosavinta of Thailand, second VP; Joseph Lin (Chinese Taipei), Gird VP; Kotara Hata (Japan), treasurer; Bill Wee (Singapore), Baharuddin Jamil (Malaysia), Ukhin Shwe (Myanmar), Guo Bei (China), and Dorji (Bhutan), council members.

Korea's Um Sung Ho was reappointed secretary general by President Hong.

Mountain Dew, 7-Up Green clash for crown

MOUNTAIN Dew Yellow Gold routed 7-Up Green, 10-2, recently in Game 2 of their Pepsi Cup In-Line Roller Hockey championship to tie the best-of-three title series at 1-1 and forge a rubber match today at GameworX fourth level of Festival Supermall Filinvest Alabang.

Showing total team effort with five players scoring two goals apiece, Mountain Dew averted a sweep and thus forged a deciding match today for the title. Pepsi Blue defeated Mirinda Orange, 4-2, to snatch the third-place trophy.

Yellow Gold scorers were Earl Dewit, Guide Sanmocte, Eric Rivera, Vince Alimurong and Vic Rufino.

In the junior division, 7-Up Yellow bested Mountain Dew Green, 25-10, to score a 2-0 sweep of the title series. Winford Palma and Christian Villanueva scored seven goals each, while Randell Laureta and Perfecto Rubio contributed six and five goals, respectively.

"Now that the series is back to square one, I'm sure the action will become all the more intense and we expect people to really enjoy the competition," said GameworX president Jesus "Jun" Avecilla.

SPORTSWATCH

Career low for Jordan

INDIANAPOLIS—Indiana held Michael Jordan to a career-low six points Thursday, while Jalen Rose scored 26 points to lead the Pacers to a 108-81 win over the Washington Wizards . Indiana's Jamaal Tinsley added 16 points and 12 assists. Jordan played only 25 minutes and was held to 2-for-10 shooting from the field. The last time Jordan failed to reach double digits was March 22, 1986 when he scored eight points against Cleveland - his previous low. He had reached double digits in 866 consecutive games. **NBA RESULTS:** Atlanta 100, Miami 96; New Jersey 88, Detroit 75; Dallas 89, Chicago 74; Utah 99, Portland 87; Phoenix 84, Boston 82; Seattle 101, L.A. Clippers 90.

Beijing AP top story

LONDON—Eight years ago, Beijing came within two votes of being awarded the Olympics. This year, despite continuing concerns over human rights, China landed its big prize. The selection of Beijing as host of the 2008 Summer Olympics was voted the top international sports story of 2001 in a worldwide poll of Associated Press subscribers. Beijing handily defeated four other cities - Toronto; Paris; Istanbul, Turkey; and Osaka, Japan - in the International Olympic Committee vote in Moscow on July 13.

New yacht leaders

HOBART, Australia—Volvo Ocean Race competitor News Corp took the lead Friday in the Sydney to Hobart yacht race as the leading crews jockeyed for position down the east coast of the island state of Tasmania. News Corp, an Australian yacht, and Swedish boat Assa Abloy opted for a direct route down the coast to Tasman Island and it appeared to be paying off as the winds drop. The Australian yacht had a narrow lead, with Assa Abloy second and former leader Illbruck from Germany, which chose a more easterly route, about a nautical mile behind in third place.

'KASIBULAN'

Young kids display their newly learned skills during the Adidas Predator Football Cup held recently in Sta. Cruz, Davao del Sur. Kasibulan instructor Erwin Protacio organized the event in coordination with the Davao Football Association.

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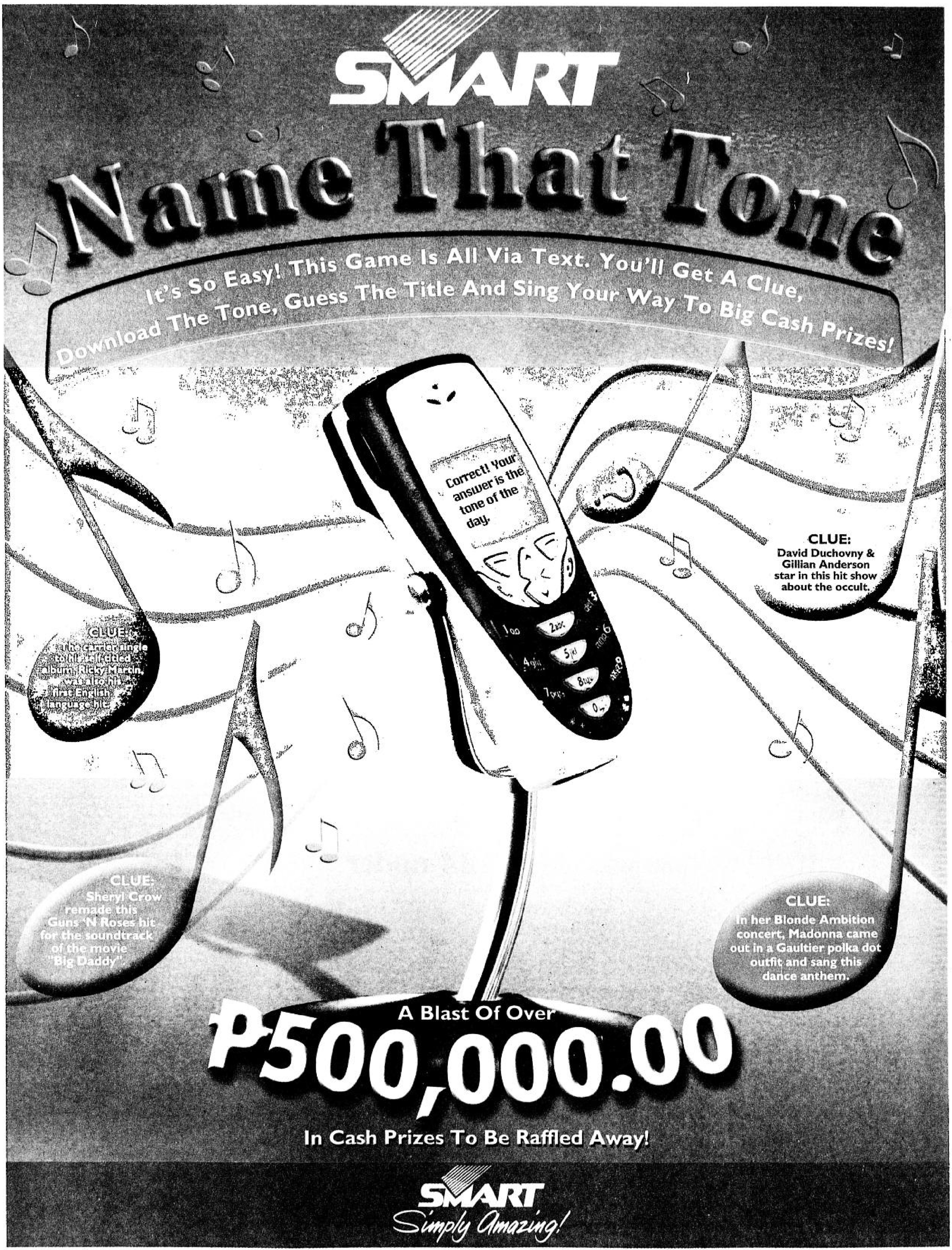
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CLUE: The carrier single to his self-titled album, Ricky Martin, was also his first English language hit.
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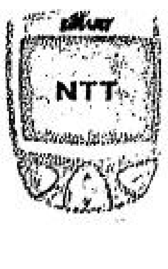

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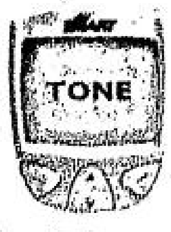
Play The Game!

You will then receive a clue about the mystery tone of the day.



SMART
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B. Law and Order
C. The Practice

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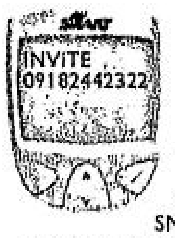
ANSWER A

Text in your Answer!

Simply key in ANSWER <A, B or C> and send to 234. You will receive a message telling you whether you got the correct answer or not. There will only be one chance to guess the mystery tone of the day. Each correct answer earns you 5 raffle entries for the Weekly, Monthly and Grand draws.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09182442322

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Key in INVITE <your friend's SMART celfone number> and send to 234. Each invite earns you 1 raffle entry, to be added to your total raffle entries.

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Only subscribers with ringtone-download-capable handsets will be able to hear the mystery tone of the day. However, downloading is necessary to get the multiple choice set of ringtone titles. A subscriber without the necessary handset can still answer based on the clue and multiple choice set of ringtone titles.

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**There will be a standard charge of ₱12.00 per ringtone download and ₱2.50 per message for all other transactions.*

**Cut-off time for the entries will be at 11:59 PM of the day before the draw date.*

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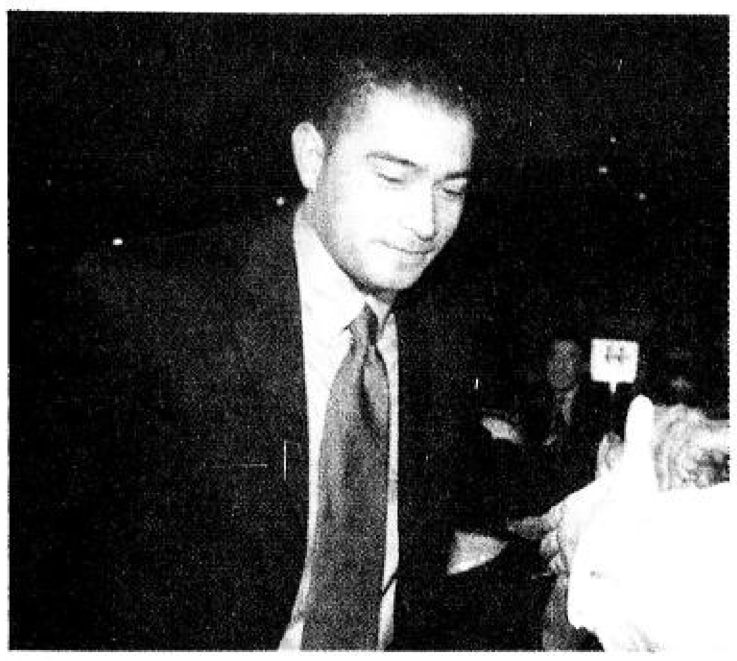
METRO

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

On Target: Why coup will not succeed A20
P100,000 offered to kill Cinco A20



MONTANO. For him, "Bagong Buwan" is the best picture winner. JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Mother Lily cries foul over Cesar's sarcasm

By Leah Salterio

REGAL Films matriarch Lily Monteverde cried foul and threw her cellphone on the floor after actor Cesar Montano made a sarcastic comment onstage about the triumph of "Yamashita" for best picture over "Bagong Buwan" during the "Gabi ng Parangal" awards night of the 2001 Metro Manila Film Festival on Thursday. *(See related story on page A21)*

Monteverde, who hardly meddled even in the toughest controversy that Regal Films faced in the past, yesterday waded into the fray and defended her filmfest entry.

"Why can't they give a chance to other producers?" she lamented. "They're making it ap-

MOTHER LILY/A20

Bloodied umbrella belonged to Blanca

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE LONGTIME aide of murdered actress Nida Blanca yesterday identified one of the two umbrellas found in Blanca's car as belonging to the actress.

Elena Dela Paz went to the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) to check some of the evidence found in Nida's car, which was left at the Atlanta Centre building in San Juan and where her body was found.

Besides the umbrella, Dela Paz also identified other articles, which she said belonged to the slain actress. These include a gold wristwatch, Kleenex tissue, belt bag, an address book, a coin purse and a Movie, Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB) identification card.

BLOODIED/A20

Housemaid petitions KBP to get Korina off the air

By Alcuin Papa

THE MAID of newsreader and radio talk show host Korina Sanchez yesterday asked the Kapisanan ng mga Broadkaster sa Pilipinas (KBP) to get the controversial broadcaster off the air. Bernadita Inocencio, 42, through her lawyer Mel "Batas" Mauricio, asked the KBP to "forfeit her (Sanchez) right to continue as a broadcaster." Sanchez, who has a radio talk show on ABS-CBN's radio station dzMM and anchors the channel's TV Patrol news program, should not be allowed to go on the air anymore because of "gross moral unfitness as a broadcast journalist."

But in a phone interview yesterday with the INQUIRER, Sanchez just laughed off Mauricio's move. "He (Mauricio) can do what he wants," she said. "He's really riding on this for the popularity and he's really publicity hungry. I know the KBP will be fair."

On Thursday, Sanchez's lawyer Salvador Panelo criticized Mauricio, himself a host of a legal advice program of ABS-CBN's rival network GMA-7, for being a "publicity-seeker who would jump at any opportunity to be in the limelight."

Panelo accused Mauricio of sensationalizing the case and said that Mauricio should just advise his client Inocencio to settle the issue amicably "since it would not go anywhere."

Inocencio had accused Sanchez and her supposed boyfriend Paul Aquino of beating her up and then throwing her out of Aquino's unit at Bel-Air Condominium in Makati last Dec. 21 after she told them that she would be leaving their employ and asked for her salary for December.

"We based our petition on the affidavit executed by my client Inocencio," Mauricio said. "Our basis is the beating my client received from Sanchez and her boyfriend, the repeated delays of my client's salary and non-remittance of the SSS contributions of my client by Sanchez," said Mauricio.

Another basis for the petition, which Mauricio said was stated on Inocencio's affidavit, was that Sanchez was living simultaneously with two men.

Sanchez said that whether or not she is living with anyone is "a private matter." But she elaborated on

HOUSEMAID/A20

Vandolph back in hospital

By Leah Salterio

QUIZON

AFTER being at home for four days, Vandolph Quizon was brought back to the hospital for a 38-degree fever.

Ace comedian Dolphy rushed his son by Alma Moreno to the Makati Medical Center on Thursday from the former's house in Marina Village, Parañaque.

But a source close to Vandolph's family yesterday told the INQUIRER the 17-year-old actor had no serious complications, which could have caused the fever.

Vandolph suffered multiple fractures after a vehicular accident in Pangasinan last month.

Dolphy failed to attend the "Gabi ng Parangal" awards night of the Metro Manila Film Festival, where he was supposed to present an award-tribute to the slain actress Nida Blanca.

Yesterday morning, Moreno received a call from Vandolph who asked his mother to bring him ripe mangoes to the hospital, the source said.

Vandolph also asked his mom to make a phone call to the United States, where his siblings, Alma's children by Parañaque Mayor Joey Marquez, are now vacationing for the Christmas holidays. He wanted to talk to VJ, Moreno's youngest son with Marquez. "Vandolph cried when he talked to VJ because he misses him so much," the source said.

Vandolph, whose name is a combination of his parents'—Vanessa and Dolphy—spent the holidays at home after being confined in the hospital for more than a month, since the Nov. 17 accident.

He was discharged from the hospital on Dec. 23 and went straight to the house of his mother in Tahanan Village, Sucat, Parañaque.

The first thing Vandolph did when he arrived

VANDOLPH/ A20

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Down and out and out in the cold

BY PHILIP C. TUBEZA

"MY children no longer ask for Christmas gifts. They understand how hard our situation is."

This was what Roy B. Gaurano, 41, of San Juan, said of his four children, who celebrated a second Yuletide season without finding gifts on Christmas morning.

A vicious labor dispute a year-and-a-half ago at the Light Rail Transit (LRT) left Guarano and his wife jobless and out in the cold. For two years now, the Guaranos have survived by borrowing money from neighbors for their daily needs.

"This is our second December without work," he said.

Gaurano, 41, said he tried to find work as a part time driver. But even when he had a part time job, he could barely survive his family. His pay was not enough to support four children—three boys and a girl, the oldest of whom is aged 14.

"Sometimes, we don't get to eat three times a day," he said. "We just don't wake them up when they sleep late into the morning. Then, we don't eat breakfast.

"*Diskarte na lang* (surviving by our wits). When you get some (money), you enjoy it. But it's really hard most of the time."

Going to the mall is one decision he finds hard to make, not because of the crowd and traffic, but because of the money he has to shell out just to get there.

"Compared to last year, the situation is much worse this Christmas," Guarano observed. "We still had our savings then. Nothing is left, and now, the prices of commodities are also higher."

To perk up his children's sagging spirits on Christmas, he took them to the next best thing to a Santa Claus: their godparents, aunts and uncles.

Gaurano, a member of the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU), was also expecting his family to attend a small KMU Christmas party on Sunday. But on Christmas day, he took his children to their grandparents to enjoy the day.

And like the Christian hope born of the baby in a manger in Bethlehem some 2000 years ago, Gaurano is still hopeful he would find work, or be rehired by the LRT.

"I haven't lost hope that someday we will get our jobs back," he said.

President Macapagal-Arroyo promised KMU members in a pre-Edsa II meeting at St. Scholastica's College that workers who would get laid off, particularly the LRT employees, would be rehired, Guarano said.

Now, he is waiting for Ms Macapagal to deliver on her promise.

"We are not expecting a dole-out. We just want her to fulfill her promise to return to us what is rightly ours," he said.

P100,000 offered to kill Cinco

BY PHILIP C. TUBEZA

THE NATIONAL Bureau Investigation (NBI) has two witnesses who claimed that a former Commission on Elections (Comelec) official offered them a "large amount of money" to kill Comelec official Velma Cinco.

An NBI source yesterday said they are verifying the claim of two Comelec employees who said that the former Comelec official offered them P100,000 to murder Cinco, chief of the Comelec's education and information division.

The source said the former official approached the employees on September and made the offer.

The employees claimed that they refused, but the official tried again and promised to give them a much bigger amount. They refused again, the source added.

Cinco was shot dead in an ambush on Nov. 20 at the corner of Pedro Gil and Eden streets in Sta. Ana, Manila while she was on her way to work on her red Kia Pride (TDR 779) with her son Carlo and sister Marian S. Jayme. She died from four gunshot wounds in her head and body. She was 62.

Carlo was hit in his right shoulder while Jayme was unhurt.

The source said the two Comelec employees would undergo a polygraph exam to determine if they are telling the truth.

The authorities have charged only one man in the killing. Conrado Robles, 47, a former Comelec casual employee, and of Barangay Malakimpok, San Pascual, Batangas was charged with murder and frustrated murder.

Investigators have other suspects in the killing but are still waiting for the results of ballistic tests before they decide to file murder charges against the alleged killers.

Why coup will not succeed

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

COUP rumors are sending chills down the spines of some officials in the Macapagal-Arroyo administration.

The officials should ignore those rumors because they'll never become reality. The more rumors of coup persist, the more it won't come.

Even if those rumors disappear, plotters will never succeed in mustering enough force to spring a coup d'etat.

* * *

Why? Because the enlisted personnel, the cannon fodder, will no longer join their rebellious officers. The lowly EPs have become wiser.

"*Hindi na po kami uto-uto,* sir, *kapag* coup *ang pinag-usapan* (When it comes to coup, we will never be gullible anymore)," a young sergeant told me.

* * *

The privates, corporals and sergeants who took part in the December 1989 coup attempt suffered more much for their misadventure than their officers did.

True, the officers were detained along with the rank-and-file coup participants. But they were released in no time; many of them promoted to the next higher rank. One even became a senator of the republic.

And the enlisted personnel? They were detained for a much longer period, dismissed from the service, or demoted two ranks lower.

* * *

When the late Transportation Secretary Arturo Enrile was still the Armed Forces chief of staff, I asked him the reason for the unequal treatment of the coup plotters.

Why were the officers who took part in the 1989 coup attempt promoted and given responsible positions while the enlisted personnel were having a hard time getting back into the service or getting back their lost rank? I asked then General Enrile.

Because, according to Enrile, that's the way it is in the military. Offending officers are treated as gentlemen, while their men are treated less gently. It's military tradition.

I knew that Enrile was uncomfortable with my question, but I would give him an "A" for candor.

But his answer did not sit well with the privates, corporals and sergeants who took part in the 1989 coup because they followed orders from their officers.

* * *

Two pickpockets from Davao City were arrested while trying to victimize shoppers at the Divisoria Market in Manila a few days before Christmas Day.

They preferred to be caught in Manila rather than in Davao City, their own turf.

Why? Because Davao City has become a very dangerous place for all kinds of criminals, be they petty or big-time. Street thieves, bank robbers, drug pushers, rapists, killers get their due.

* * *

Consider this: pickpockets and bag or cell phone snatchers are liable to have their fingers broken with raps from a hammer. Their hands, which are the tools of their nefarious trade, become useless.

Another example: the rapist of a coed of an exclusive girls' school was found dead, a victim of torture before he was killed. A photo of his face, with eyes practically coming out of their sockets, was taken and scattered all over the city.

Most drug pushers have left the city after Mayor Rodrigo Duterte mentioned their names in his radio program. They took it as a cue that their "time" was up. The others who persisted in their trade became part of the crime statistics.

* * *

Human rights advocates and Duterte's detractors have pointed an accusing finger at him. But they don't have any evidence that he is behind the vigilante killings.

There is, however, a group that has claimed responsibility for those killings. But whether it is connected with the mayor is a matter of speculation.

Most city residents, though, think that the extrajudicial execution or unusual punishment of criminals has done their city a lot of good. The crime rate has considerably gone down.

* * *

Zamboanga City businessman Lepeng Wee thought his exoneration by the Department of Justice of involvement in the alleged illegal importation of 39 drums of chemicals from Malaysia would finally give him peace of mind. He was wrong.

His detractors are employing every foul means to overturn the DOJ resolution.

Recently, two Zamboanga City Hall employees were seen at the detention cell of Malaysian Tan Ngee Foo in Bicutan, Taguig. They were allegedly trying to convince the Malaysian, who imported the chemicals, to implicate Wee in the chemical smuggling.

* * *

The two City Hall employees were Rolly San Juan, spokesperson of Zamboanga City Mayor Maria Clara Lobregat, and Rolly Carpio, a cameraman.

The two saw the Malaysian purportedly to interview him. But the Malaysian was reportedly steadfast in his admission that he owned the chemicals which were to be used in making foam.

The Malaysian was even promised his immediate freedom if he would implicate Lepeng Wee.

Who do you think sent San Juan and Carpio to see Tan Ngee Foo in Bicutan all the way from Zamboanga City?

* * *

Calling all former Philippine Airlines **flight attendants, their friends and co-employees: there will be a "Grand Global Homecoming" dinner and dance on Jan. 5, 2002 at 7 p.m. The occasion will be held at the Fiesta Pavillion's Grand Ballroom at the Manila Hotel.**

The host of the event is the Association of Former Flight Attendants of PAL.

The proceeds from the event will go to the putting up of the future home for the elderly in the country.

The direct beneficiary is the Streetpals Foundation, an association of PAL flight attendants that cares for street children.

Coco levy fund to upgrade farmers' insurance coverage

THE FORMER president and chief executive of the Coconut Industry Investment Foundation (CIIF) proposed that the coco levy fund, estimated at P700 million, be used in support of upgraded insurance coverage for coconut farmers and a credit access program that would significantly push down interest rates for their loans.

Oscar Torralba, president of CIIF for 16 years, made the proposal on Thursday in a meeting of concerned sectors at the office of Department of Agriculture Secretary Leonardo Montemayor.

Representatives of agriculture bureaus, Land Bank of the Philippines, Quedan Corporation, and various coconut farmer groups attended the meeting, which Montemayor himself presided over.

Torralba's proposal dovetails a financial plan hatched with the Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) earlier by Luisito Lorenzo, presidential adviser for agriculture and rural development. Lorenzo's plan calls for 5-45-50-fund split for friendly loans that will only charge 6 percent in annual interest rates for coconut farmer loans, instead of the prevailing 12 percent to 14 percent interest cost.

From the coco levy fund, coconut farmers will contribute 5 percent of needed funds, 45 percent would consist of interest-bearing funds from private bankers, while half will be provided by the LBP.

If the resulting load fuad adds up to P2.1 billion, straight line estimates show that every coconut farming family in the country can be supplied with a P1 million loan package at very, very low interest rates. Lorenzo said this scheme has worked successfully in Thailand.

Housemaid petitions ...

(From page A19)

Inocencio's charge that she did not remit her SSS contributions, saying it was a simple "lapse" on her part, which she can resolve anytime. She said Inocencio never confronted her about the SSS remittance.

"Those charges are flimsy and untrue," Sanchez stressed. "She (Inocencio) was very well taken care of. There were no salary delays. In fact, she asked for advances on her salaries and I gave them to her. On top of her salary, she also got an allowance for food."

Sanchez claimed that as far as she knew, SSS contributions were remitted only after 6 months of deductions.

The Makati police have prepared charges of serious physical injuries against Sanchez.

On Thursday, Mauricio had also filed charges of violation of the SSS Law for non-remittance of her contributions against Sanchez on behalf of Inocencio. If found guilty, Sanchez faces imprisonment of 6 to 12 years.

In his letter dated Dec. 26 to KBP President Ruperto Nicdao, Mauricio also called for an "immediate investigation by the KBP of Mrs. Inocencio's charges to determine the truth and veracity thereof."

"Ms Inocencio has signified her willingness to appear in this investigation to substantiate her charges against Ms Sanchez," the letter said.

Mauricio also asked the KBP to come out with a decision based on the investigation "finding Ms Sanchez guilty of gross moral unfitness to remain a broadcaster of the ABS-CBN or any other broadcasting firm in the country and forfeiting her right to continue as a broadcaster." He also asked the KBP to prohibit "all broadcasting firms in the Philippines from allowing Ms Sanchez to work as a broadcaster."

Sanchez had also filed charges of qualified theft against Inocencio, whom she accused of stealing her gold bracelet worth about P250,000.

Panelo said that Inocencio knew about the necklace when the maid denied she stole it, claiming Sanchez had pawned it.

"The admission means she knew there was something (that was) stolen," Panelo said. "That constitutes probable cause. She was privy and she had access to steal."

Bloodied umbrella ...

(From page A19)

Dela Paz said the umbrella, which had bloodstains, was given to Blanca during a promo. Investigators believed it was used to stab the actress. Blanca had three shallow stab wounds in her armpit.

Quoting members of the Blanca's household, an NBI source earlier said the umbrella belonged to Blanca's husband, Rod Strunk. The umbrella was supposedly seen inside Strunk's Vannette before Blanca was found murdered.

Strunk's lawyers decried the disclosure and said that it was "malicious and baseless."

"The disclosure is baseless, unfair and malicious because it assumes the umbrella, if there is one, 'belongs' to Mr. Strunk and—even worse, directly implies, if not accuses, him of using it to murder his wife," said a statement from Strunk's law firm.

The NBI has two umbrellas in its possession. The other has a broken handle and was allegedly used to beat up Blanca.

NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco urged Strunk to take the lie detector test since it would "help very much" in "the solution" of Blanca's murder.

Wycoco made the statement while announcing that the NBI has stumbled on "new angles and motives" in the killing.

"Being the husband, I expect him (Strunk) to be the first one to want this case solved," Wycoco said. "I also can't imagine his lawyers not wanting this case solved."

Strunk's lawyers earlier advised their client not to take the test. But they promised that Strunk would later cooperaté with the bureau.

Wycoco said the bureau has new leads after it got sworn statements from "50 or more persons."

"(But) we don't want to divulge these because they (the suspects) might hide or cover their tracks," Wycoco said.

"Please bare with us. We are making progress (although) the evidence were (tampered). We also had an admission but it was later recanted," Wycoco added.

He said NBI forensic experts and members of the police Scene of the Crime Operations (Soco) team would also meet today to reevaluate the evidence gathered throughout the investigation.

Earlier, NBI investigators complained that members of the Soco team were not careful in handling the evidence taken from the crime scene at the Atlanta Centre building.

Wycoco also said that the bureau also has witnesses in the abduction of businessman Mike Martinez in Parañaque. The witnesses have provided the NBI with descriptions of the abductors, he said.

"This is now only a matter of sleuthing," Wycoco said, while refusing to comment if the bureau is looking at the roster of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG).

Martinez's family had filed a petition for *habeas corpus* before a Quezon City court.

Martinez was abducted at 7 a.m. of Nov. 19, five hours before police investigators linked him to the Blanca murder in a press conference.

Police claimed that Martinez was the go-between who helped Strunk hire Philip Medel Jr. to kill Blanca. Medel later retracted his confession.

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News that makes
a difference

Mother Lily cries foul over Cesar ...

From page A19)

pear that 'Yamashita' did not deserve to win. We really worked hard for the project. Even my children were involved in the making of that movie."

Montano said in his acceptance speech for the best actor award, which he won for his role in "Bagong Buwan" that thè best picture for him is still his movie. He made an apparent attempt to thank the jurors and the Metro Manila mayors behind the filmfest. But Montano also taunted them, saying, "*Wala kaming* trophy, *bibili na lang kami sa* Recto (We don't have a trophy. We will just buy one on Recto)."

Monteverde said she was hurt when she later learned what Montano said in his speech.

"It's very painful to me," she said. "I'm happy for (Cesar), but I feel sorry for him because he didn't show any respect to the jurors. He insulted them. (The jurors) were composed of respected people. How can you simply buy their votes?"

But director Marilou Diaz-Abaya said she was not disappointed when Chito Roño's "Yamashita" edged out "Bagong Buwan" in the best picture and best director race.

Roño, however, said Montano shouldn't have made those comments.

"He should have given dignity to his best actor award by not saying that kind of statement," Roño said. "I thought he tried hard to do it in jest, but he turned out to be sarcastic."

Abaya told the INQUIRER she even sent a text message to Roño and congratulated him after the awards night. The best director winner was a no-show during the "Gabi ng Parangal" because of fever. But he acknowledged Abaya's message and thanked her.

"I was even expecting 'Yamashita' to be number one at the box-office," Abaya said.

"I'm 21 years in the business, so I'm an old warrior. Every time you enter a competition, you understand that there are ex-number of jurors, so they have the prerogative and the last say who they think should win over another. That's something you should get into with your eyes wide open."

This year's MMFF had 13 jurors, chaired by director Eddie Romero, with Prof. Bienvenido Lumbera as vice chair. The members were Marichu Vera-Perez Maceda, Boots Anson Roa, William Mayo, Jun Pereira, Ros Olgado, Olivia Cenizal, Efren Montano, Gwendolyn Malonzo, Corazon Cruz, Edren Piñon and Rebecca Viñaviles.

Sources said three of the jurors are mortal enemies of Abaya. Mayo, Pereira and Olgado were in the same interguild, which was said to have also boycotted Abaya's 1998 MMFF entry, "Jose Rizal."

"I was prepared for anything that night," Abaya said. "Maybe for the jury, 'Bagong Buwan' was not their winner, but what I'm really proud about is the audience. They were lining up to see the movie. We've won many hearts and minds of the audience. That's very important."

Abaya added, "I never underestimate the audience, but they never cease to surprise me. (The film) connected with the audience for whom we made the movie in the first place. The audience affirmed that they are really in search for peace."

Monteverde said "Yamashita" was the result of hard work of her family and production staff. She produced the film under Regal's sister outfit, MaQ Films, managed by her daughter Roselle Monteverde.

"The film industry is dying and we tried so hard to come up with this movie," she said. "We have to help one another instead of trying to put down each other. "I want my children to hold their head up, be proud and thank me for the legacy that I will have to leave them."

Vandolph back in hospital

(From page A19)

in their house was to tour the entire house on his wheelchair.

"It was not as if he found it as something new," the source said. "He probably just missed the house."

On Dec. 24, Dolphy visited Vandolph. The comedian's two daughters with singer-actress Zsa Zsa Padilla, Zia and Nicole, accompanied Dolphy during the visit.

A Christmas Mass was also held in the house, officiated by Fr. Geronimo Jacobs. After the Mass, Vandolph distributed gifts to the household staff, security personnel and close aides of his mother and stepfather, Parañaque Mayor Marquez.

On Dec. 25, Vandolph was brought to Dolphy's house so he could spend Christmas day with his father.

The actor's Christmas wish is to be able to play basketball again, said the source.

Vandolph's biggest idol is hardcourt superstar Michael Jordan. A life-size standee of Jordan in his Bulls uniform is inside Vandolph's room, beside a collection of more than 20 rubber shoes.

Attending to Vandolph are two private nurses who work in day and night shifts, and a stay-in physical therapist.

"He (Vandolph) eats anything he wants," said the source. "The first thing he looked for when he got out of the hospital was his favorite gelatin."

While he was at home, Vandolph also asked for fried rice, Saisaki Angus beef, steamed lapu-lapu, *lechon* and fried chicken.

"Sometimes, Dolphy even sends the food to the house," said the source.

Daily prayers continue to be said at the Marquez residence for Vandolph's speedy recovery. A group of female aides of Moreno and Marquez, led by Nanay Avila, start the prayers as early as 9 a.m.

'Yamashita' triumph marred by Cesar's loaded speech

By Alex Y. Vergara

THE ADVENTURE drama "Yamashita: The Tiger's Treasure" surprisingly galloped away with the lion's share of the Metro Manila Film Festival awards. But it was a triumph marred by protests, including the palpable displeasure of Cesar Montano, who won the best actor trophy for his role in "Bagong Buwan."

Short of questioning the judges' verdict, Montano showed his displeasure at the results and gave a loaded acceptance speech as the three-hour awards ceremony drew to a close at the Philippine International Convention Center's Reception Hall on Thursday.

"Pardon me, but no offense meant," Montano said in Filipino. "For me 'Bagong Buwan' is the best among the lot. For you it's 'Yamashita.' Well, we all have our respective preferences. Never mind, we'll just buy a trophy in Recto...

"This film shows the best in the Filipino...Not all Filipinos are corrupt. There are still Pinoys out there worthy of the world's respect. I'm not referring to myself, but I'm trying my best."

Social drama

Co-produced by former Miss Universe Margie Moran and directed by Marilou Diaz-Abaya, the social drama tackled the horrors of war and the resulting cultural and religious differences during then President Estrada's all- out war with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front more than a year ago. Montano played a Muslim doctor torn by his duty to family and country. After leaving his job in Manila to bury his son in Mindanao, he discovers for himself the harsh realities his community faces.

"Bagong Buwan" had to settle for second best picture and the Gatpuno Villegas Cultural award. It also won for Ronnie Lazaro and Jiro Manio best supporting and best child performer awards, respectively. Nonong Buencamino won best musical score, while Joey Ayala won best original theme song for "Walang Hanggang Paalam."

"We dedicate this [award] to the victims of war in Mindanao, whether Muslims, Christians or indigenous people," said Moran, who marked her first-foray into film production with "Bagong Buwan." She also commended the film's cast. "Not only did they portray their roles wholeheartedly. After this experience, they have now become committed citizens of this country."

Armando's comeback

MAQ's "Yamashita" revolves around the recollections of a World War II survivor (Armando Goyena), now an old man, who was among the hundreds of Filipinos forced by fleeing Japanese soldiers to bury their loot, and his grandson (Danilo Barrios). Their quiet lives in the United States are turned upside down as they get embroiled with a band of greedy bounty hunters 60 years later.

Megged by Chito Roño, the film won most of the technical awards such as best cinematography (Neil Daza), best editing (Manet Dayrit) and best visual effects (Roadrunner Network, Inc.). It also won best festival float. The film's winning streak began soon after the show started when Roño, Roy Iglesias and Roselle Monteverde Teo won best original story. Iglesias later won best screenplay.

Roño was a no-show, but MAQ Productions' big boss Lily Monteverde (a.k.a. "Mother" Lily) sat through the affair. Aside from Yamashita, the veteran movie producer fielded two other entries this year under different film companies: top grossing horror-comedy flick "Bahay ni Lola" (Regal Entertainment, Inc.) and sex drama "Hubog" (Good Harvest Productions).

Edu Manzano, who hosted the affair with Miriam Quiambao and Eula Valdez, couldn't resist taking potshots at "Yamashita's" onslaught.

"Please stay tuned because coming up next is the Joanne Banyaga Youth Achievement Award," Manzano deadpanned, referring to the Regal insider who kept coming back on stage to accept "Yamashita's" bounty.

"I was supposed to win the award," he later joked in Filipino, referring to Montano's trophy. "People were already congratulating me even before the show started until a certain Joanne Banyaga blocked my path."

Manzano stars with Dina Bonnevie in Viva Films' "Tatarin," a period drama directed by Tikoy Aguiluz and based on Nick Joaquin's short story "Summer Solstice." Apparently, not even the National Artist was good enough as far as the board of jurors led by veteran director Eddie Romero was concerned. Joaquin lost to Iglesias and Teo, one of Mother Lily's daughters.

"I'd rather be in the company of a National Artist," said a sour-graping nominee from "Tatarin"'s, who asked not to be identified, "rather than be grouped with a bunch of questionable winners."

Empty-handed

People behind "Tatarin," "Bahay ni Lola," "Susmaryosep! 4 Fathers" and "Di Kita Ma-Reach" went home empty-handed. The latter stars presidential son and Pampanga vice governor Mikey Macapagal Arroyo.

Upsets and surprises continued into the night when veteran actresses Caridad Sanchez and Amy Austria of "Bagong Buwan" lost to Alessandra and Assunta de Rossi in the best supporting actress and best actress categories, respectively. The De Rossi sisters starred in Joel Lamangan's "Hubog," the festival's third best picture.

"I'm quite surprised at the results myself," said Romero, even before "Yamashita's" impending victory as best picture was announced. "In a crowded field with four leading contenders, anything can happen. I'm in no position to reveal my choices because these directors are all friends of mine."

He dispelled speculations of cheating because each of the 13 judges voted in secret. The long and sometimes contentious process of openly discussing various aspects of each film has long been abandoned, he said.

"We may have our respective biases, but there's no room for manipulation," added board member and film director William Mayo. "Aside from choosing the best in each category, we each ranked the seven nominees in each category based on the merits of their work." Sycip, Gorres and Velayo accounting firm tabulated the results.

Aside from boosting local films, mayors of Metro Manila's 13 cities and municipalities spearhead the annual project to promote positive or redeeming Filipino values. Completing this year's board of judges are Bienvenido Lumbera, Marichu Maceda, Boots Anson Roa, Olivia Cenizal, Ros Olgado, Efren Montano, Gwendolyn Malonzo, Corazon Cruz, Efren Piñon, Jun Pereira and Rebecca Viñaviles.

SISTERS ACT. Alessandra and Assunta de Rossi savor their victory as best supporting actress and best actress, respectively, for their roles in "Hubog." PHOTOS BY JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

WAS it Assunta's gown or her portrayal that clinched the trophy?

CHILD actor Jiro Manio ("Bagong Buwan") wins best child performer, as presenters Serena Dalrymple and Onemig Bondoc look on.

BEST actor winner Cesar Montano ("Bagong Buwan") kisses wife Sunshine Cruz, while director Marilou Diaz-Abaya, with Jiro Manio, manages to smile despite the film festival jurors' apparent snub.

METROBRIEFS

Man forgives adulterous wife

CONSTRUCTION worker Edwin Hurado, 31, of Pinagpala Village in Barangay Karuhatan, Pasig City, caught his wife having sex with their houseboy Ricky Dagan on Christmas day. But the spirit of the season apparently moved Hurado to forgive his wife, Virginia, 31, saying in his affidavit of desistance that forgiving her was his most precious Christmas gift. Police records showed Hurado had gone home early on Tuesday night to surprise his wife, but it was he who was surprised. He told police he was about to enter their bedroom when he heard his wife moaning. When he peeped inside the room, Hurado said he saw his wife having sex with Dagan. Hurado told police he thought of killing his wife and lover, but that he could not do it because he loved her. He said he just went out of the house quietly and sought the help of local barangay officials who lent him a video camera to record the adulterous act of his wife and lover. After filming his wife and lover in bed, Hurado and the barangay *tanods* then announced their presence to the lovers and brought them to the police station. *Nelson Forte Flores*

Grandfather stabbed dead

Grandfather Mario Quiling, 65, never woke up from his deep slumber after his 15-year-old nephew, an out-of-school youth, stabbed him dead while he was sleeping in his *kariton* (pushcart) on Claro M. Recto Avenue in Tondo, Manila. Quiling, of 1147 Claro M. Recto Avenue, Tondo, Manila died after his nephew stabbed him repeatedly in the arms and chest about 9:15 p.m. on Wednesday, police said. Witnesses told police Quiling's nephew arrived with a knife about 9:15 p.m. on Wednesday and lunged at Quiling who was sound asleep in his pushcart. Quiling. The boy then fled on foot and disappeared in the darkness while his uncle gasped for breath as his wounds continued to bleed, police added. Pedicab driver Noel Dagenham brought Quiling to the Metropolitan Hospital where he died, police said. Investigators are still trying to find out what led the boy to kill his elderly uncle, police said. *Philip C. Tubeza*

Cook killed

COOK Dennis O. Leus, 24, of 1634 Mercury St. in V. Mapa Extension, Sta. Mesa, Manila survived the beating by two teenaged brothers, but died anyway after the brothers' friend, errand boy Jessie Boy Ingowa, of Barangay 601, Zone 59 in Manila stabbed him once in the right side of the body, police said. Ingowa fled after the stabbing about 3 a.m. Tuesday, said investigator SPO4 Norberto S. Obrero, of the Western Police District-homicide section. Police said Leus was walking along Mercury Street in Sta. Mesa, Manila when the brothers ganged up on him for still unknown reasons, and beat him in the head with the lead pipe handle of a sickle. Leus collapsed on the roadside, his head bleeding. But he managed to stand up and go after the brothers, catching up with them and then throwing stones at them, police said. Ingowa appeared from out of the darkness armed with a fan knife and suddenly stabbed Leus before escaping on foot, police said. Leus was rushed to Our Lady of Lourdes hospital and was later transferred to the Mandaluyong General Hospital, where he died while undergoing surgery, police said. Police are now hunting down Ingowa and the two brothers. *Philip C. Tubeza*

Construction worker shot dead

CONSTRUCTION Omar Alberto, 34, of Barangay San Isidro in Antipolo City died after security guard Randy Papillera, a stay-in guard of Britanny Executive Homes, also in Barangay San Isidro shot him while he was sleeping with a .38 revolver on Wednesday night, police said. Isidro died from several gunshot wounds in the head and body. Police said Alberto and Papillera were earlier engaged in a verbal tussle that led into a fistfight, which was stopped when cooler heads intervened. Isidro went to his bunkhouse to sleep, but Papillera went to the guardhouse, took his service revolver, then proceeded to the bunkhouse and shot dead the sleeping Isidro. A deformed slug was found at the crime scene, police said. Papillera was supposedly jealous of Isidro who was said to be popular among the local women, police said. *Nelson Forte Flores*

No cooperation, no witnesses

THE GATLABAYAN family has refused to cooperate with police investigation of the shooting involving Gatlabayan brothers Lorenzo, 56, and Jose, 58, cousins of Antipolo Mayor Angelito Gatlabayan. The mayor had ordered the police to conduct a thorough investigation of the incident, but no member of the Gatlabayan family want to face investigators, a source said. No witnesses were also found to the incident where Jose allegedly shot Lorenzo at close range during an argument in front of a restaurant on M.L. Quezon Extension in Barangay San Roque on Wednesday. A policeman said none of the family members do want to get involved. Bystanders brought Lorenzo to the Eulogio Amang Rodriguez Memorial Medical Center where he is still in critical condition. Police believed that an old grudge is the reason behind the shooting. *Nelson Forte Flores*

WPD official fumes over missing Fundador

By Philip C. Tubeza

POLICE Inspector Alfredo B. Opriasa, of the Western Police District's general assignment section is angry.

He lost three bottles of Fundador brandy right inside the WPD-Gas office on Thursday afternoon.

Worse, he suspects 10 other policemen of stealing the bottles.

Opriasa, 40, an official of the WPD-Gas, lodged a complaint with the WPD-Theft and Robbery Section against the policemen who took his Fundador bottles, said investigator PO3 Arnaldo Tolentino.

Opriasa said he even has a witness. Taxi operator Manuel Luis Panlilio, 49, of Pasay City, allegedly saw the policemen take the bottles.

Panlilio said he will be able to identify the suspects if he sees them again.

Opriasa told investigators the theft happened between 2 and 4 p.m. on Thursday.

Opriasa allegedly asked a helper to buy the Fundador bottles, which he was going to give to reporters at a Christmas party.

But when the helper returned to the WPD-Gas office, Opriasa was not there. The helper then left the bottles of brandy at the office.

Between 2 and 4 p.m., the suspected lawmen allegedly went to the office. At the time, Panlilio was at the station to file a complaint, and he allegedly saw the policemen take the bottles.

Panlilio said his suspicions were not aroused since, after all, the men who took the bottles were "policemen."

NBI joins Strawberry probe

By Christian V. Esguerra and TJ Burgonio

THE NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation has started a probe of its own to determine who killed the former child actress Strawberry, just days after the national police's Criminal Investigation and Detection Group joined the Las Piñas city police in investigating the case.

A CIDG official confirmed the NBI's involvement in the case. But CIDG chief Director Nestorio Gualberto said this was not official yet. He said he will welcome the bureau's involvement once the NBI makes a formal announcement.

The CIDG also clarified yesterday it is the Las Piñas City police that will take over the full-scale investigation of the death of the former child actress.

The NBI started its own investigation into the week-old case on the request of Quezon City Rep. Maite Defensor, according to a retired police official, who is an uncle of Strawberry, Anouk Baldo in real life.

The police official, who visited the CIDG headquarters at Camp Crame, could not tell investigators why Defensor made the request.

Baldo was a member of Defensor's staff at the House of Representatives.

Police are also bent on subjecting Baldo's boyfriend Mark Doromal, his security aides, and members of the family of businessman Raynaldo Picar, to lie detector tests to settle once and for all the conflicting accounts of last week's traffic altercation which resulted in the death of the former child actress in Las Piñas.

Insp. Sergio Gaarrobo, Station Investigation Division chief, said he has requested the Philippine National Police to subject them to polygraph tests.

The female witness, who had told police that the shots that killed Baldo, 25, came from the group of Doromal, will be subjected to a similar test, according to Gaarrobo.

Las Piñas police will also request the PNP Firearms and Explosives Unit to conduct an inventory on all firearms issued to Combat Security Agency, which is reportedly owned by Doromal's father, Gaarrobo said.

The firearms, including the slugs recovered from the crime scene, will be put through ballistic examinations, he said.

At least four spent shells from a 12-gauge shotgun and other firearms were found just outside the BF Executive Village where Baldo was shot on Dec. 18, the police officer said.

Results of the lie detector and ballistic tests will confirm the Picars' claims that it was Doromal and his group who fired the fatal shots that killed Strawberry, Gaarrobo said.

Doromal had denied the Picars' claim.

On Wednesday, the CIDG joined in the investigation on the request of Baldo's family, who had expressed fears that one of the suspects might "influence" the investigation of the city police.

Gualberto dispatched a seven-man team to Las Piñas to gather evidence and get statements from other witnesses yesterday morning.

There are at least three vital witnesses now in the custody of the CIDG.

But Gualberto refused to discuss the statements of the witnesses.

The retired police official, who asked not to be named, said Strawberry's immediate family was so far satisfied with the investigation of the CIDG, which earlier came under fire for bungling the probe of actress Nida Blanca's murder.

"They're on the right track," the official said of the CIDG investigators.

SLEX tolls to go up Jan. 1

By Alcuin Papa

MOTORISTS using the South Expressway are in for some bad news when the New Year comes around: The Toll Regulatory Board approved an increase in tollway fees to take effect on Jan. 1.

The TRB announced that rates will increase by 60 percent, at most. A second set of increases will be implemented from July 1 to the end of next year.

According to the TRB, Class 1 vehicles, or cars, pickups and jeepneys, will have to pay P33, up from P22.50, from Magallanes to Alabang.

Class 2 vehicles (six-wheeler trucks and coasters) will be paying P66, up from P56.50.

Class 3 vehicles (10-wheeler trucks and buses) will be paying P99, up from P67.50.

For the elevated portions, Class 1 vehicles will be charged P65, Class 2 will pay P130 and Class 3 will be charged P195.

Aside from that, toll fees from Alabang to Calamba will also be increased. Cars will now be charged P12, from P7.50, while trucks will be charged P25, from P15.

The TRB said they agreed to increase the toll rates as the devaluation of the peso against the dollar has affected the Skyway builders' ability "to service its dollar-denominated loan obligations."

"Consequently, the tolls collected from the Skyway System have not been enough to repay the loans," said TRB executive director Jaime Dumlao.

The TRB also expressed concern that the inability of the Skyway Projects to service its debt obligations may hurt the financial prospects of continuing the project from Bicutan to Alabang and Buendia to Balintawak.

"It is in the public interest that more tollways are built to solve our traffic problems," Dumlao said. "If toll rates are not enough to pay for the financing of these projects, no one will fund the additional new toll roads that the public needs badly. Our country cannot move forward if its citizens are trapped in traffic."

Prized pets lost in Tondo fire

By Philip C. Tubeza

A TWO-HOUR fire gutted a warehouse in Tondo, Manila yesterday morning, destroying P5 million worth of property and killing twelve imported dogs and an Arowana fish.

The blaze destroyed the warehouse of a Jose Chua, at the corner of Limay and Torres Bugallon streets in Tondo, Manila, arson investigators said.

Besides burning down the warehouse, the fire also killed 12 Japanese pugs and a golden Arowana, investigators added.

They said a Japanese pug costs P25,000 each, while the golden Arowana was worth P20,000.

Alfred Lo, a member of the Manila Fire Volunteer Brigade, was injured when a falling beam hit him as he was trying to help put out the fire.

Police said the conflagration began about 3:55 a.m. when a huge explosion was heard coming from inside the warehouse.

The blaze reached fifth alarm before firefighters put out the flames at 5:06 a.m.

Arson investigators are still trying to find out the cause of the fire.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Saturday, December 29, 2001
5th Day after Christmas

1st Reading: *1 Jn 2:3-11*
Gospel: *Lk 2:22-35*

When the day came for the purification according to the law of Moses, they brought the baby up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, as it is written in the law of the Lord: *Every firstborn male shall be consecrated to God.* And they offered a sacrifice as ordered in the law of the Lord: *a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.*

There lived in Jerusalem at this time a very upright and devout man named Simeon; the Holy Spirit was in him. He looked forward to the time when the Lord would comfort Israel, and he had been assured by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before seeing the Messiah of the Lord. So he was led into the Temple by the Holy Spirit at the time the parents brought the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law.

Simeon took the child in his arms and blessed God, saying,
"Now, O Lord, you can dismiss
your servant in peace,
for you have fulfilled your word
and my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you display for all the people to see.
Here is the light you will reveal to the nations and the glory of your people Israel."

His father and mother wondered at what was said about the child. Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother, "See him; he will be for the rise or fall of the multitudes of Israel. He shall stand as a sign of contradiction, while a sword will pierce your own soul. Then the secret thoughts of many may be brought to light."

Commentary:

This is a very joyful gospel. The old man Simeon's desire is fulfilled by God when he sends his Son to Simeon via Mary and Joseph who come to the Temple bringing the baby Jesus. Jesus is the fulfillment of all of God's promises. When we have Jesus, we have everything that the Lord promised. To have Jesus is to have him who answers all our yearnings. So many people do not see that it is Jesus who fulfills their deepest desires. Pray that you may come to see Jesus as the fulfillment of all your yearnings, and take him into your heart of hearts.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

REMEDIAL LAW (CIVIL PROCEDURE)—Forum-shopping—Forum-shopping is "the act of a party against whom an adverse judgment has been rendered in one forum, of seeking another (and possibly favorable) opinion in another forum other than by appeal or special civil action of *certiorari*, or the institution of two (2) or more actions or proceedings grounded on the same cause on the supposition that one or the other court might look with favor upon the party. Where the elements of *litis pendentia* are not present or whether a final judgment in one case will not amount to *res judicata* in the other, there is no forum-shopping. In the case at bar, there is no forum-shopping inasmuch as the cause of action in Civil Case No. 91-56185 is separate and distinct from the cause of action in Civil Case No. 221. [Citations omitted.] [Justice de Leon, Jr., Second Division, Bangko Silangan Development Bank v. Court of Appeals, G.R. No. 110480, June 29, 2001]

Digest by R.B. Vera

Jobless woman falls to her death

ACCOUNTING clerk Genevie A. Javier was supposed to attend noonday Mass, and pray to the Catholic patron of lost causes, at St. Jude Church near Malacañang Palace on Thursday.

She did not get there. After failing to land a job for the past two years, Javier committed suicide in Manila the other day.

Javier, of Lopez Apartments on Lardizabal Street, Sampaloc, Manila, jumped to her death from the second floor of her unit, said Detective Athos Lim De Quiros, of the Western Police District's homicide section.

The victim's skull was fractured and both her arms were dislocated as a result of the fall, De Quiros added.

He said Javier lost her job at a trucking firm based in Cubao, Quezon City in November 1999. Since then, she had been trying to find permanent work, moving from one odd job to another because the pay was not enough.

The victim's father, Silvestre B. Javier, said his daughter did not show any sign of depression. She also allegedly did not complain about the hard time she was having looking for a job.

Around noon Thursday, Genevie asked permission from her father to attend Mass at St. Jude's.

But her neighbor Tessie M. Sison told investigators she saw the victim climb on the railings of the apartment's second floor and then jump.

The victim was taken to the University of Sto. Tomas Hospital where she was pronounced dead about 2 p.m., De Quiros said.

Police did not find a suicide letter in her apartment, but they did find a St. Jude prayer card in the victim's clothes, De Quiros added.

He said investigators will still wait for the results of the autopsy before they close the case. *Philip C. Tubeza*

Manila dad wants strays slaughtered

By Jerome Aning

A MANILA councilor has filed an ordinance directing owners and keepers of stray, noisy, deformed and unfriendly dogs in the city to either remove or kill the canines.

Councilor Julio Logarta of the sixth district said any dog that disturbs the peace and quietness of a neighborhood by constant barking or whining may be declared a "nuisance" upon petition signed by at least five members of different households.

Dogs that have become "objects of disgust" in a community because of disease or malformation due to accidents or old age, as well as those dogs that constantly defecates in public places or in private property other than its owner's, can also be declared a nuisance and subject to destruction.

"While it's every person's right to keep dogs as pets, he or she should also be ready to perform the responsibilities that coincides with owning pets," the alderman said in his bill.

Logarta also wants the ownership of dogs limited to only two per household.

Under the proposal, the petition has to be forwarded to, and authenticated by, the barangay chair, who shall then notify the owner or keeper of the dog.

The owner or keeper is required to remove or kill the dog within three days after he receives the notice.

If the owner or keeper refuses or fails to get rid of the dog, the barangay authorities are automatically empowered to seize the nuisance canine and cause its "immediate disposal."

Logarta also proposed that all dogs in the city be registered by their owners with the city health department, which will then issue a "dog tag." Registration fee, which is renewable every two years, will be at P150 per canine.

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Taguig serial killer, rapist gunned down

By Christian V. Esguerra

TAGUIG police on Thursday killed a 23-year-old man who had allegedly been on the prowl, raping and killing the town's residents.

Ferdinand Corillo, of Pinagsama Village, Taguig, died of gunshot wounds following a shootout with police on the C-5 Service Road in Western Bicutan, according to police.

His two companions escaped.

Corillo was supposedly behind the series of brutal killings in Taguig since March this year, including the rape-slay of a nursing student, according to a report by Senior Insp. Jesus Kabigting, Precinct 7 commander.

Corillo was also suspected of abducting a 14-year-old girl on Thursday, police said.

Maganto wants chance to crack Chua murder

By Jerome Aning

CHIEF Supt. Romeo Maganto, who has been on "floating status" for almost a year, wants a chance to crack the case of the slain University of Sto. Tomas cadet and has volunteered his personal services to track down the killers of Mark Chua.

Maganto, former Southern Police District director and former head of the Interior Department's Task Force Katapat, met with members of the Chua family in Manila on Christmas eve and offered to hunt the suspects and unmask the mastermind.

Though he is now in "floating status," which means he is receiving a salary but is not detailed to any position, Maganto promised the Chua family that he will use "all his resources" to shed light on the nine-month-old case.

"I want to dig deeper into the case and help bring justice to the family because I can't bear to see people being victimized by others, particularly if they are men in uniform," the police official said.

According to Maganto, "he will leave no stone unturned in the crusade against the mastermind."

Explaining his reason behind aiding the Chua family, the police official said: "(Mark) left us a legacy that we must reform the institution which protects our family."

Welson Chua, Mark's father, said the family has been praying hard for the swift solution of Mark's grisly murder.

Six cadet officers of the UST's Reserved Officers Training Corps have been indicted before the Department of Justice on the strength of evidence provided by six witnesses.

The National Bureau of Investigation has so far tagged Michael Von Rainard Manangbao, Paul Joseph Tan, Eduardo Tabrilla, Arnulfo Aparri, Eliseo Pitarge and Enrico Corpuz as Mark's possible killers.

Manangbao has reportedly fled to the United States.

The elder Chua, however, lamented that only the perpetuators and not the masterminds were named.

The NBI and the police have presumed that the student was killed because he exposed corruption and various anomalies at the UST-ROTC department. The incident led to the sacking of key officers in the UST ROTC.

Welson said a group of young ROTC students could not have masterminding the gruesome killing on their own.

Mark was reportedly abducted from UST in March. His body, hogtied and wrapped in masking tape, was dumped in the Pasig River a few days later.

"The real mastermind is out there, possibly training other youngsters to do kidnap for ransom activities," Welson said.

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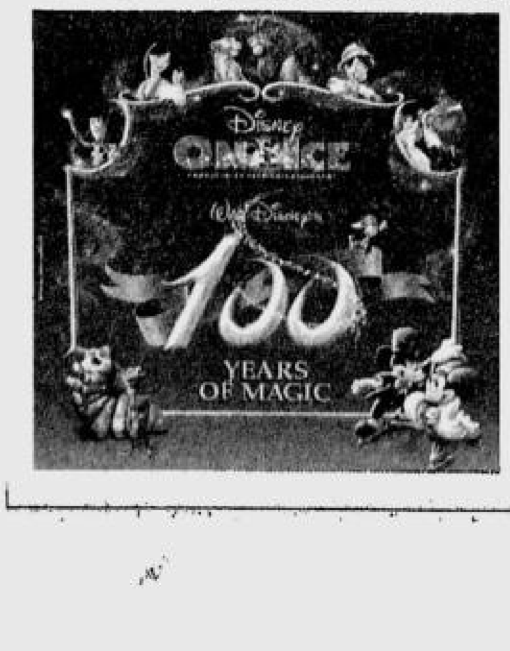

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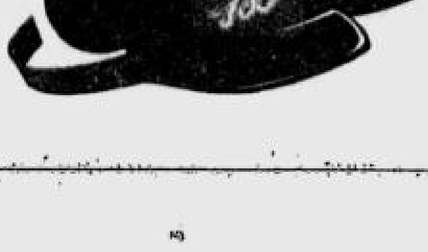

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GLORIETTA 1 (formerly QUAD)	1	BAGONG BUWAN	In SONY DYNAMIC DIGITAL SOUND
	2	BAHAY NI LOLA	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
	3	YAMASHITA	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
	4	HINDI KITA MA-REACH	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
GLORIETTA 4	1	SUSMARYOSEPI 4 FATHERS	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
	2	YAMASHITA	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
	3	BAHAY NI LOLA THX	In DSD/SDDS/DTS DIGITAL SOUND
	4	TATARIN	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
	5	HUBOG	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
	6	HINDI KITA MA-REACH	In DTS/SDDS DIGITAL SOUND
	7	BAGONG BUWAN	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
		Art Film	
GREENBELT	1	TATARIN	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
	2	BAHAY NI LOLA	In SONY DYNAMIC DIGITAL SOUND
	3	YAMASHITA	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
	4	REGINE AT THE MOVIES DEC. 28, 29, 30 Onstage	
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1	SUSMARYOSEP 4FATHERS THX	In DSD/SDDS DIGITAL SOUND
	2	BAGONG BUWAN	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
	3	TATARIN	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
	4	HINDI KITA MA-REACH	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
	5	HUBOG	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND

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2 (SDDS)	BAHAY NI LOLA
3 (DTS)	TATARIN
4 GOLD (DTS)	YAMASHITA
5 GOLD (DOLBY)	4 FATHERS
6 GOLD (SDDS)	HUBOG
7 GOLD (DOLBY)	HINDI KITA MA-REACH
8	YAMASHITA
9	BAHAY NI LOLA
10	HUBOG

Pearl Plaza Cinemas
(Parañaque) tel. 853.4486

1.	YAMASHITA
2	TATARIN
3 (DTS)	HINDI KITA MA-REACH
4	BAGONG BUWAN
5	4 FATHERS
6 (DTS)	BAHAY NI LOLA

Golden Pearl THX

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 831.6603

1	TATARIN
2	YAMASHITA
3	BAGONG BUWAN

starmall Movies
(Shaw Blvd.) tel 724.4986

1	BAHAY NI LOLA
2	HUBOG
3	4 FATHERS
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	BAGONG BUWAN
5	TATARIN

METROPOLIS star
543.3927 loc. 150

1	BAHAY NI LOLA
2	HINDI KITA MA-REACH
3	YAMASHITA
4	TATARIN
5	BAGONG BUWAN
6	4 FATHERS
7	
8	

PREMIERE CINEMA THX
(Makati City) tel 751.2011 to13

1	BAHAY NI LOLA

Center Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	YAMASHITA
2	MONSTERS

FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL, INC.
tel 930.9515

1	TATARIN
2	HUBOG
3	BAHAY NI LOLA

Spring
(Libertad, Pasay City) tel 831.7864

1	BAHAY NI LOLA
A	HUBOG

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376

1	HUBOG
2	YAMASHITA
3	BAGONG BUWAN
4	BAHAY NI LOLA

GOTESCO CINEMA

City
(Manila) tel 734.8588

1 (DOLBY)	YAMASHITA
2	BAGONG BUWAN
3	TATARIN
4	BAGONG BUWAN
5	BAHAY NI LOLA
6	
7 (DTS)	
8 (SDDS)	HUBOG
9 (DOLBY)	BAHAY NI LOLA

Caloocan
tel 362.3508

2	BAGONG BUWAN

Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781

1	BAHAY NI LOLA
2	BAGONG BUWAN
3	YAMASHITA
4 (SDDS)	HUBOG
5	HINDI KITA MA-REACH
6 (DOLBY)	BAHAY NI LOLA
7 (DTS)	TATARIN
8	4 FATHERS
9	TATARIN

Commonwealth
tel 951.0083

1 (DTS)	BAHAY NI LOLA
2	HUBOG
3	YAMASHITA
4	TATARIN
5 (SDDS)	BAGONG BUWAN
6	HINDI KITA MA-REACH
7 (DOLBY)	4 FATHERS
8	BAHAY NI LOLA

Ortigas
tel 656.6795

1	BAGONG BUWAN
2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3 (DTS)	TATARIN
4	YAMASHITA
5 (SDDS)	HUBOG

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470

1	YAMASHITA

Sampaguita
(Cubao) tel 911.7888

1	BAHAY NI LOLA

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724

Dilson	TATARIN
Lords	TATARIN
Jennet	HUBOG

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1	TATARIN
2	BAGONG BUWAN
3	YAMASHITA

Prima
(Pasig) tel 641.1215

3	TATARIN

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
SUPER CINERAMA
tel 733.4238

1 (DOLBY)	BAHAY NI LOLA
2	HUBOG
3	4 FATHERS
4	BAGONG BUWAN
5	TATARIN

New Divisoria Mall
DIVISORIA CINEMA
tel 244.4619

1	HINDI KITA MA-REACH
2	YAMASHITA
3	TATARIN
4	CLOSED
5	CLOSED
6	HUBOG

Baclaran LRT
LRT CINEMA
tel 512.0115

1 (DOLBY)	BAHAY NI LOLA
2	HUBOG
3	BAGONG BUWAN

Berma
tel 879.2029

1	4 FATHERS
2	BAHAY NI LOLA

CitiMall
(Parañaque) tel 820.7269

1	BAHAY NI LOLA
2	YAMASHITA

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa Laguna)
tel (049) 534.2185 / 534.2198

1	TATARIN
2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3 (DTS)	YAMASHITA

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	BAGONG BUWAN
2 (DTS)	BAHAY NI LOLA
3 (DOLBY)	YAMASHITA
4	TATARIN

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

1	BAHAY NI LOLA
2 (DOLBY)	YAMASHITA
3 (DTS)	TATARIN
4	BAGONG BUWAN

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1	YAMASHITA
2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3	SOON TO OPEN
4	SOON TO OPEN

Cinema 2000 MovieTown
(Tarlac)

1	HUBOG
2	TATARIN
3 (DOLBY)	BAHAY NI LOLA
4 (DTS)	YAMASHITA

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	HINDI KITA MA-REACH
2	TATARIN
3	YAMASHITA
4 (DTS)	BAGONG BUWAN

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	YAMASHITA
2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3 (DTS)	TATARIN
4	HINDI KITA MA-REACH
5	BAGONG BUWAN

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	BAHAY NI LOLA
2	BAGONG BUWAN
3	TATARIN

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249-2566

1	BAHAY NI LOLA
2	BAGONG BUWAN
3	YAMASHITA

Olivarez Tagaytay
tel (046) 413.0311

1	BAHAY NI LOLA
2	YAMASHITA
3	BAGONG BUWAN

Morales Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.9736

1	BAGONG BUWAN
2	TATARIN
3	HINDI KITA MA-REACH

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808

1 (DTS)	BAHAY NI LOLA
2 (DTS)	TATARIN

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 430.1657

1	HUBOG
2	HINDI KITA MA-REACH
3	BAHAY NI LOLA

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	YAMASHITA
2	HUBOG
3	BAHAY NI LOLA
4	TATARIN

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY EX)	BAGONG BUWAN
2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3	YAMASHITA
4 (DTS ES)	TATARIN

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1	YAMASHITA
2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3	BAGONG BUWAN
4	HUBOG
5	TATARIN
6	SUSMARYOSEP (4 FATHERS)
7	DI KA MAREACH
8	BAGONG BUWAN
9	HUBOG
10	DI KA MAREACH

ERMITA 536-7809 TO 12

1	YAMASHITA
2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3	BAGONG BUWAN
4	DI KA MAREACH
5	TATARIN
6	SUSMARYOSEP (4 FATHERS)
7	HUBOG

METRO EAST 632-9115-16 / 633-7541

1	HUBOG
2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3	DI KA MAREACH
4	YAMASHITA
5	TATARIN
6	BAGONG BUWAN
7	SUSMARYOSEP (4 FATHERS)
8	BAHAY NI LOLA

NOVALICHES 936-3228 to 31

1	HUBOG
2	TATARIN
3	BAGONG BUWAN
4	DI KA MAREACH
5	BAHAY NI LOLA
6	SUSMARYOSEP (4 FATHERS)
7	YAMASHITA
8	BAGONG BUWAN

IMUS (046) 471-9190

1	DI KA MAREACH
2	SUSMARYOSEP (4 FATHERS)
3	TATARIN
4	HUBOG
5	YAMASHITA
6	BAHAY NI LOLA

BACOLOD (034) 441-0453 / 0458

1	YAMASHITA
2	HUBOG
3	BAHAY NI LOLA
4	ROCKSTAR
5	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
6	MUSKETEER

ILOILO (033) 330-8077 / 8078

1	BAGONG BUWAN
2	YAMASHITA
3	HUBOG
4	BAHAY NI LOLA
5	TATARIN
6	ROCKSTAR

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THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

ARANETA CENTER THEATERS 911-3101

ALI MALL CINEPLEX-1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-2	SUTLA (RE-ISSUE)
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-3 (DDS)	MUSKETEER
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-4 (SDDS)	HARRY POTTER
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	EARTHQUAKE
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	MVP
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7 (DOLBY)	SUMMER CATCH
FARMERS PLAZA-1 (DOLBY)	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
FARMERS PLAZA-2 (DOLBY)	PISNGI
FIESTA CARNIVAL	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
NEW FRONTIER	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

MANILA

EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	DALAWA SI EBA / HIYAS SA PARAISO
ODEON	BAGONG BUWAN
ODEON-2	YAMASHITA
ROBEN	HUBOG
TANDEM-1	SEX MEDUSA
TANDEM-2	SEX EDUCATION
TIMES	PUKYUTAN / STORY OF US

QUEZON CITY

ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	CLOSED
ACT-4	CLOSED
CORONET-2	ORIGINAL SIN
QUEZON-1	HUBOG
REMAR	BAGONG BUWAN
REMAR-2	YAMASHITA

NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA

A	YAMASHITA
B	BAHAY NI LOLA
C	HUBOG

MANDALUYONG CITY

SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA-2	THE MUSKETEER

CAINTA RIZAL

STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	BAHAY NI LOLA
CINEMA-2	HUBOG
CINEMA-3	YAMASHITA
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	DI KITA MA-REACH
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	TATARIN
CINEMA-6	BAGONG BUWAN
CINEMA-7	BAGONG BUWAN
CINEMA-8	HUBOG
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	BAHAY NI LOLA
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	BAHAY NI LOLA
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	YAMASHITA
CINEMA-12	TATARIN
CINEMA-14	BAGONG BUWAN
CINEMA-15	FOUR FATHERS

LORES

CINEMA-2	CLOSED
CINEMA-3	CLOSED

POWER PLANT CINEMA

CINEMA-1	HUBOG
CINEMA-2	BAHAY NI LOLA
CINEMA-3	TATARIN
CINEMA-4	YAMASHITA
CINEMA-5	BAGONG BUWAN
CINEMA-6	BAGONG BUWAN

UNIWIDE METROMALL

(LAS PIÑAS)	
CINEMA-1	
CINEMA-2	
CINEMA-4	

UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL

(PARAÑAQUE)	
CINEMA-1	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
CINEMA-2	THE OTHER SIDE OF LOVE
CINEMA-4	ALAMID

Rizal high reunion

THE RIZAL High School Alumni Association will hold its 14th grand reunion on Sunday, at the campus in Pasig City, with Vice President Teofisto T. Guingona, Jr., as guest of honor and speaker.

The reunion will be hosted by Class '51, the golden jubilarians, together with Class '76, the silver jubilarians.

Rizal High School has an impressive roster of alumni who have distinguished themselves in government, military and private sector services.

For questions, please call telephone numbers 640-3441, 951-4580, 631-4614 and 411-1662.

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6	4 FATHERS
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8	DI KITA MA-REACH
9	BAHAY NI LOLA
10	BAHAY NI LOLA

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2	DI KITA MA-REACH
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4	BAHAY NI LOLA
5	BAGONG BUWAN
6	BAHAY NI LOLA
7	HUBOG
8	YAMASHITA
9	BAGONG BUWAN
10	TATARIN
11	BAGONG BUWAN
12	4 FATHERS

SM CITY MANILA 5239240

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3	TATARIN
4	YAMASHITA
5	BAHAY NI LOLA
6	HUBOG
7	TATARIN
8	DI KITA MA-REACH
9	BAGONG BUWAN
10	BAHAY NI LOLA
11	4 FATHERS
12	HUBOG

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4	YAMASHITA
5	DI KITA MA-REACH
6	BAHAY NI LOLA
7	YAMASHITA
8	BAHAY NI LOLA
9	BAGONG BUWAN
10	BAHAY NI LOLA
11	TATARIN
12	HUBOG

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2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3	YAMASHITA
4	4 FATHERS

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4	YAMASHITA
5	TATARIN
6	BAGONG BUWAN
7	4 FATHERS
8	BAHAY NI LOLA
9	TATARIN
10	DI KITA MA-REACH
11	BAHAY NI LOLA
12	BAGONG BUWAN

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2	DI KITA MA-REACH
3	YAMASHITA
4	BAHAY NI LOLA
5	4 FATHERS
6	BAHAY NI LOLA
7	TATARIN
8	BAGONG BUWAN
9	YAMASHITA
10	HUBOG

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2	4 FATHERS
3	DI KITA MA-REACH

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4	YAMASHITA
5	BAGONG BUWAN
6	BAHAY NI LOLA
7	CLOSED
8	TATARIN

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2	TATARIN
3	YAMASHITA
4	4 FATHERS
5	BAHAY NI LOLA
6	BAHAY NI LOLA

SM SUCAT 8294975

1	DI KITA MA-REACH
2	TATARIN
3	BAGONG BUWAN
4	4 FATHERS

SM DAVAO

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2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3	HUBOG
4	BAGONG BUWAN
5	TATARIN
6	MUSKETEER

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Recycling NGO wins Asian waste management award

By Joey Papa
Contributor

A PHILIPPINE non-government organization promoting waste recycling has won an international waste management award.

The ZKK Foundation Inc. under Dr. Judea Millora won the First Asian Waste Management Excellence Award in ceremonies held in Kuala Lumpur last Nov. 7.

The event was organized by the Regional Institute for Environment Technology, an NGO composed of environment groups from the European Union and a number of Asian countries. It will be a biennial event that will recognize excellence in ecological solid waste management. Winners in three other categories were also honored in Kuala Lumpur.

The members of ZKK are also members of the Zero Waste Recycling Movement of the Philippines.

ZKK stands for Zero Kalat sa Kaunlaran. The group is behind the transformation of Dagat-dagatan from a virtual dump into a garbage-free community. Today, ZKK members are helping organize other communities for waste reduction, recycling and composting through the use of ecological centers or materials recovery facilities in accordance with Republic Act No. 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act.

Model

In addition to its Dagat-dagatan Ecological Center, ZKK has another center in Taytay, Rizal that can serve as a model for other communities. ZKK is also in partnership with other groups, as far north as Tabuk in Kalinga, Apayao and as far south as General Santos City.

As of this writing, Millora is on her way to Lucena City where she will organize another group.

In the Asian environment awards, the winner in the government category was Taipei City, whose mayor persisted in promoting recycling to achieve his city's objective of reducing its solid waste. In the brief time that the city has been practicing ecological solid waste management, its people have been able to reduce their waste volume by almost 30 percent, a considerable accomplishment vis-à-vis the performance of other countries that started recycling earlier.

In the industry category, the recycling-based Siam Craft Industries of Thailand got the award.

The award in the individual category went to the Malaysian minister for housing and local government, Datu Seri Ong Ka Ting, who has successfully led the eco-waste management efforts of his own community and actively coordinates the massive and fully government-subsidized campaign to inform and educate the people of Malaysia on waste reduction, recycling and composting.

Malaysia itself is an inspiration for other countries. Its government under Prime Minister Mahathir is strongly pushing for ecological solid waste management to prevent any crisis that could happen in two years' time if they persist in their old ways of disposing their garbage.

The Malaysians have even declared Nov. 11, 2001 their National Recycling Day.

Lagging

Despite the award, the ZKK members could not help being sad for they could not help comparing the Philippine government's performance to those of other countries. It is said the Philippines is lagging far behind in the growing worldwide movement toward a zero waste environment.

New Zealand is seen as the world leader in zero waste movement, according to Jim Motavalli in his article in emagazine.com, entitled "Zero Waste: No longer content to just recycle waste, environmentalists want us to reduce it to nothing."

Motavalli says that in 1999, New Zealand launched a national project which assigned to the local councils the responsibility for waste reduction. The project was designed for only 10 councils but by the middle of the year 2000, a total of 25 councils were already practicing zero waste management.

New Zealand in less than two years has cut land filling from 10,000 tons to 3,500 tons per year. By November 2001 it had achieved 80 percent recovery of municipal waste.

At least six stores in Auckland also received zero waste status in 2000.

Legislation

Motavalli said that in Europe, the producers, or the companies that manufacture the products, carry the major responsibility for waste reduction.

The European Union has come out with legislation for end-of-life vehicles, with a target of 80 percent recycling rate by 2005. Starting in 1999, Holland required manufacturers to take back used computers, appliances and equipment. Italy has a similar legislation for refrigerators.

Norway has ambitious zero waste goals. It is also very good at bottle recycling.

Kisan Mehta, project coordinator of the Save Bombay Committee which developed a solid waste management program based on citizen participation and neighborhood associations, reports that the Supreme Court of Nepal has issued a writ of mandamus against dumping of waste in the sacred Bagmat River.

Mehta says this victory should further "bring zero waste condition to the beautiful Kathmandu, lying in the lap of the mighty Himalayas."

In Dhaka City, Bangladesh, the government has banned the manufacture and use of plastic (polythene) shopping bags. It is now implementing the law in phases, starting with Dhaka City and across country, with the second phase to cover the other major cities.

Challenge

Bill Sheehan, national coordinator of GrassRoots Recycling Network (GRRN), the US advocate for zero waste, explains that "zero waste is about challenging the ruling paradigm that says we can manage waste safely in landfills and incinerators."

He cites Seattle as being one city that "seems to be getting it." In 1998, Seattle adopted zero waste as a guiding principle in its solid waste management plan.

A Seattle city resolution says of zero waste: "This principle entails managing resources instead of waste, conserving natural resources through waste prevention and recycling, turning discarded resources into jobs and new products instead of trash, promoting products and materials that are durable, and discouraging products and materials that can only become trash after their use."

Sheehan also cites two counties in California and Carborro, North Carolina that have adopted zero waste goals.

When can the Philippine government set a target date for Zero Waste Philippines? The award-winning ZKK and other concerned agencies would like to know.

(*The author may be reached at bangon_kalikasan@skyinet.net*)

NIÑOS INNOCENTES:

Boy finds body of a baby girl

By Philip C. Tubeza

GRADE III student Joseph Garcia, 11, was enjoying his Christmas break when he found a dead fetus yesterday, the Feast Day of the Holy Innocents.

Garcia, of Daang Bakal Street, Tondo, Manila and a student of Bonifacio Elementary School, found the body of a seven-month-old girl floating in a canal near his home yesterday morning, said Detective PO3 Paul Dennis Javier, of the Western Police District's homicide section.

He said the boy was playing when he found the fetus about 10 a.m. yesterday at Daang Bakal Estero along Batangas Street in Tondo.

He added the boy was shocked when he saw the fetus' mangled body floating in the canal's murky waters.

Garcia then informed his relatives who, in turn, called up the police.

Javier said the fetus was taken to a nearby funeral parlor for safekeeping.

The female fetus is believed to be an abortion victim.

Though abortion is illegal in the Philippines, it is widely practiced in this predominantly Catholic country.

ERIK ARAZAS

ALL IN A ROW
There's something about the holidays that brings a smile to these children from Smokey Mountain. The children, all in their best behavior, are waiting for the Christmas goodies wrapped in colorful paper donated by kind hearts.

MRT to go on 30-minute overtime for holidays

TRANSPORTATION Secretary Pantaleon Alvarez announced that the DOTC has complied with President Arroyo's order for the Metro Rail and Light Rail transits to extend their service hours to commuters.

"The President said the two Metro Manila-based light rail systems should service more commuters throughout the Christmas season up to New Year's Day to ensure no passengers are stranded," Secretary Alvarez said.

Secretary Alvarez said the President is personally monitoring the traffic situation in Metro Manila. She noticed hundreds of commuters are still waiting for rides late at night because the MRT and LRT lines have already closed for the day.

The DOTC chief said the MRT has extended its service hours by 30 minutes in the evening, with the last trip from the North Triangle station in Quezon City to Pasay City leaving at about 10 p.m.

The last trip from the Taft Avenue station in Pasay City will leave about 10:30 every night until January.

The President, Alvarez said, has noticed that a lot of people do their shopping in the evening since most malls and department stores have also extended their store hours to accommodate late shoppers.

Alvarez noted that in the evenings, only a few buses ply their routes, and the ones operating are most often filled to capacity.

Commuters taking the MRT increased during the holidays, even without the extension of service hours, Alvarez said.

It was reported that on Dec. 14, the MRT posted its peak of 390,000 passengers for a day, 40,000 passengers higher than the average daily load.

Alvarez expressed satisfaction that many commuters have already accepted the MRT and the LRT as their alternative, if not primary, mode of transportation on regular working days.

He said that with the completion of the MRT-LRT loop and the extension of LRT services to Pasig and Antipolo, the DOTC expects passenger capacity in the MRT-LRT trains to reach 1.7 million a day.

At the start of the holidays, Alvarez ordered a full security alert in all the terminals of the LRT and MRT transits.

Alvarez also assured commuters there will not be a repeat of last year's bombing of an LRT terminal, one of several targets hit by a series of blasts, which the military blamed on the Abu Sayyaf.

About 20 people died and more than 100 others were injured in the Dec. 30 bombings.

"Based on the instructions of President Macapagal, I am coordinating with Philippine National Police authorities on how best to secure the premises and assure the safety of commuters," Alvarez said.

A tribute to fallen heroes of Dec. 30

By Alcuin Papa

MEMORIAL services will be held for the two Makati policemen who died trying to defuse a bomb in last year's Rizal Day bombings.

Part of the memorial services on Sunday, to be led by Makati City Mayor Jejomar Binay and Makati chief of police Supt. Jovito Gutierrez, is the unveiling of a marker in memory of Chief Insp. Nestor Salvador and Senior Insp. Roberto Gutierrez.

Salvador and Gutierrez were killed while they were carrying a bomb that was found in the city's commercial center last year. Other Makati City policemen killed in the line of duty will also be recognized.

The city government intends to hold the memorial service every year in recognition of the sacrifice of the police.

"December 30 will be a day dedicated to our national hero Dr. Jose Rizal and the heroes of Makati, among them Nestor Salvador and Roberto Gutierrez," said Binay.

Posthumous awards will also be given to the families of Salvador and Gutierrez, a younger brother of the Makati chief of police.

Ortigas withdraws support for Paref-Northfield School

By Agnes E. Donato

THE MEMORANDUM of agreement between former Quezon City Mayor Ismael Mathay Jr. and Paref-Northfield School for Boys has been rendered without legal basis, as the Ortigas and Company Limited Partnership (OCLP) withdraws its support for the project.

In a formal letter to the Paref-Northfield and the Quezon City government, OCLP executive vice president Rex Drilon III reasoned that the company only wanted "to ensure that (it) was not exposed to any liability arising from the project."

OCLP withdrew its support for the Paref-Northfield School project after residents of Greenmeadows and neighboring subdivisions expressed strong opposition to the project, citing the traffic problems it might cause and alleged illegalities in the MOA.

"The Ortigas and Company, Limited Partnership is regretfully constrained to withdraw (1) its non-objection to the Paref-Northfield School Project and (2) any waiver it may have, if at all, of the conditions imposed on the deed of donation dated 3 December 1981 between OCLP and the local government of Quezon City," Drilon's letter said.

City Councilor Ariel Inton, who furnished reporters a copy of the letter, said that Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. would have to scrap the controversial agreement or risk losing the city government's title over the 3.1-hectare open space in Greenmeadows III subdivision by going ahead with the project.

"Essentially the letter of withdrawal is formal notice to the QC government that it cannot use the 3.1-hectare open space for the establishment of a school because the deed of donation specifies that the lot is reserved only for parks, playgrounds and recreational purposes," Inton explained.

The Ortigas letter also noted separate letters earlier issued by the Metro Manila Zoning Administration Office and the Quezon City Zoning Administration clarifying that the Greenmeadows lot is classified as "R-1." This classification only allows preparatory schools with no more than three classrooms or nursery schools with no more than two classrooms.

The letter also cited a Nov. 3 letter by Annabelle Brown of the Third Greenmeadows Homeowners Association informing OCLP that the surrounding communities have raised "serious legal and social issues" against the project.

"Viewed in the light of the fact that OCLP is a benefactor which, in an attempt to do a public service, may be unwittingly dragged into a legal and social controversy, you will realize that this situation would be truly an unfortunate one for OCLP," the letter said.

Jocson, 62

ROMEO E. Jocson of Modesta Village San Mateo, Rizal and Bago City, Negros Occidental, passed away on Dec. 25 at the age of 62. His body lies at Arlington Memorial Parlor, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

He is survived by his wife Lourdes Gamisera-Jocson, children Veronica and Anthony Villanueva, Gilbert and Alicia, Emman and Cecile; and grandchildren Adam Job, Keana, Rosette and Denise.

Jocson was a UST Commercial Arts graduate and former art director at United Laboratories. He was a member of Kartonista ng Pilipinas, Ugnayan 80, and Tubig Kulay artist groups.

His remains will be cremated on Dec. 30, after a 2 p.m. Mass and interred on Feb. 3, 2002, at St. Peter's Cathedral, Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City.

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YAMASHITA - GP 11:00, 1:15, 3:30, 5:50, 8:10, 10:30	BAGONG BUWAN - P 13 11:20, 2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00	BAGONG BUWAN - P 13 12:00, 2:40, 5:20, 8:00, 10:40

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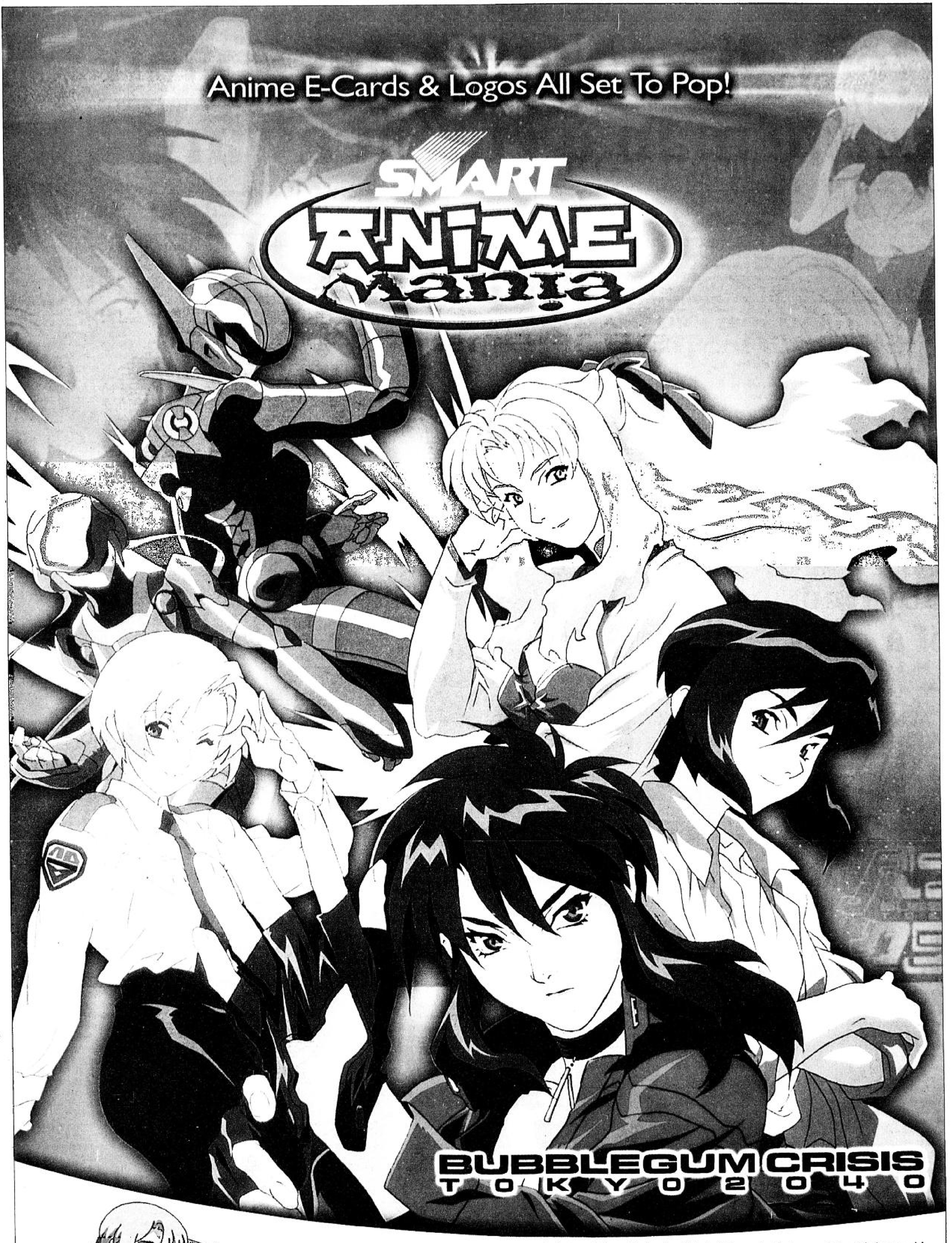

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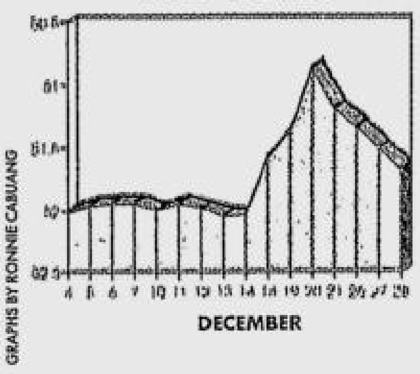

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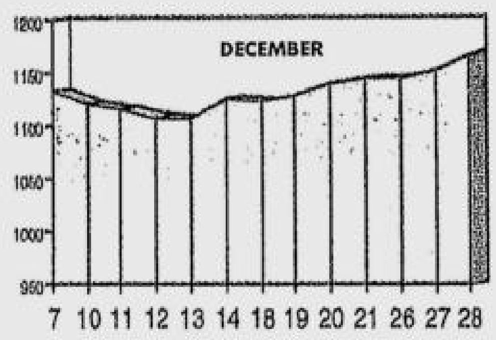
STOCK MARKET

PSE Composite Index



(See stock market report on Page B4)

Closed for the holidays

The Philippine Stock Exchange goes on New Year break on Dec. 31 and Jan. 1.

Trading will resume on Jan. 2.

Shell Group forms new company

ROYAL Dutch/Shell Group's local unit has set up a new company that was tasked to promote the development and use of solar energy in support of the government's rural electrification program.

Shell country chair Oscar Reyes said in a briefing last Thursday that Shell Renewables Philippines Corp. has signed up a deal with state firm Philippine National Oil Co. on the supply of individual solar home units.

As an attached agency of the Department of Energy, PNOC is active in efforts to energize all of the country's 42,000 barangays by 2006.

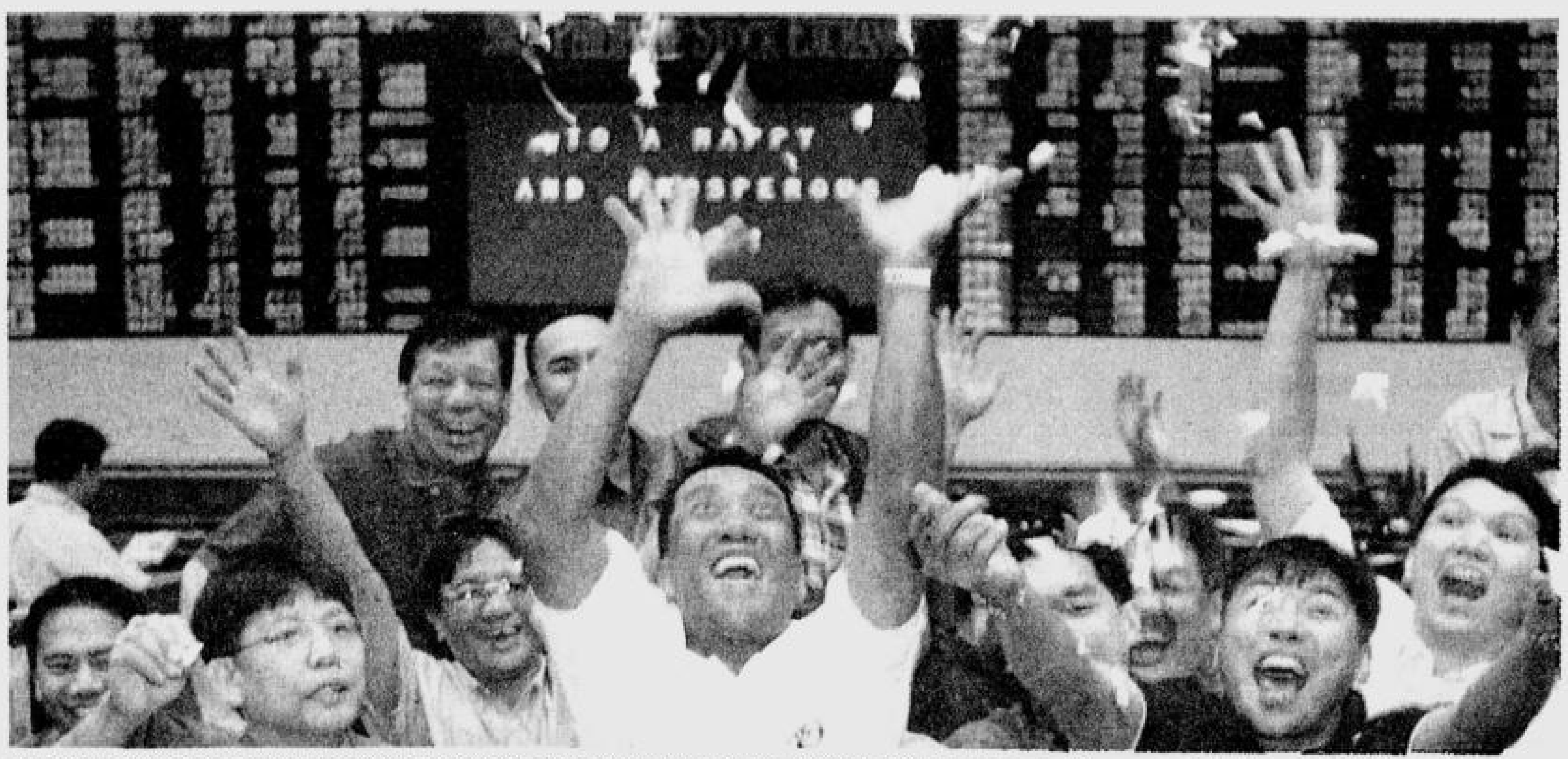
So far, there are still about 8,000 barangays without electricity.

"The individual solar home units are intended for rural areas in (the regions of Ilocandia, Cagayan Valley) and Cordillera," Reyes said.

The firm was also able to push for the use of this renewable energy in areas with electric cooperatives and other independent power producers, he added.

In a related development, the energy department said it would push for a legislation that would promote the use of new and renewable energy sources (NRES).

Energy Secretary Vicente Perez Jr. said in an interview last week that the move showed the government's determination to lessen the country's dependence on expensive imported fossil fuels.



FLOOR traders jeer and throw confetti as the trading ends for the year at the Philippine Stock Exchange. Shares ended higher as portfolio fund managers bid up prices before closing their books for 2001.

AP

Market sees recovery in '02

By DORIS C. DUMLAO

THE STOCK market yesterday ended the last trading day of the year in a positive territory with high hopes for a better year ahead after a tumultuous political transition and economic woes aggravated by a global slowdown.

The main-share Philippine Stock Exchange composite index closed 15.22 points or 1.3 percent at 1,168.08 managing to end above its 1,150-point immediate support. This year's closing figure, however, was 22 percent lower than the 2000 closing of 1,494.50. The day's value turnout was at P1.33 billion.

Cellular phone leader Globe Telecom was the most actively traded issue as key shareholder Singapore Telecom moved to increase its stake from 23.6 percent to 23.9 percent. Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. shares were also heavily traded due to efforts to infuse into the bank fresh capital through the issuance of $100 million worth of subordinated debt paper.

Some analysts believed that the market improvement was due largely to window dressing but the others were convinced it was because of expectations of a better year ahead. Window dressing is when funds play up their stock holdings to show profits for the year when they close their books.

"It was largely window dressing that boosted the market. It's the last trading day of the year, so it's the last opportunity for investors to bid up prices," said BPI Securities assistant vice president Spencer Yap.

Eagle Equities president Joseph Roxas, for his part, said the market was expecting 2002 to be a better year than the current year.

Aside from the projected rebound in the economy of the United States by mid next year, he said the local stock market, based on historical data, tend to rally after the first year of the term of the incumbent president.

"The market during the first year of a new administration is always weak, but after the first year, the market tends to go up," he said.

Stock market portal 2tradeasia.com believes the Phisix has enough staying power to maintain its poise above the 1,150 support in view of expectations of the further easing of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' monetary policies and the government's attempts to improve consumer spending.

"We are convinced that any weakness in certain fundamentally strong counters should be taken as a window to buy," it said.

Astro del Castillo, director of the Association of Securities Analysts of the Philippines, said there were windows of opportunities despite continuing concerns over peace and order, domestic politics and the pace of the global slowdown.

"There is a bright side to this dire portrait. The Philippine economy is not in recession. In fact, it continues to register modest growth. International economic bodies have already noticed its resiliency," Del Castillo said.

"More importantly, corporate earnings, despite being understandably weak in the first half of the year, have suddenly became more promising based on third quarter figures. And here is where I remove my pessimistic robe and don my optimist glasses. There is value in the market today, if only investors will see past the external problems of the market," he said.

Financial markets will be closed on Dec. 31 and Jan. 1 for national holidays.

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PGA Cars, Inc. 201 EDSA Mandaluyong City• Tel No. 724-09-64/ 727-03-86•727-03-81 to 85 727-03-88 to 89•Fax 727-03-90 **Wheels, Inc.** 222 E. Rodriguez Sr. Ave. Quezon City• Tel Nos. 721-84-77•721-84-39•411-35-80•Fax 727-63-37

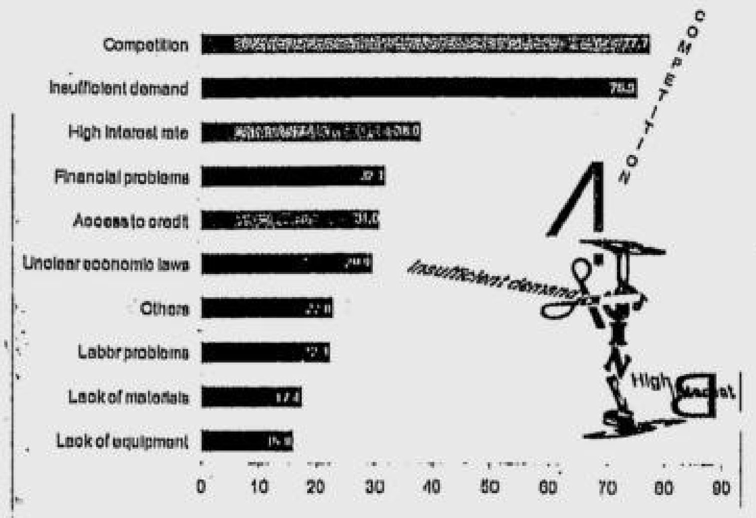
Per DTI-NCR Permit no. 4234 Series of 2001

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

Factors limiting business activities

(4th quarter 2001, in percent)



Source: Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' Business Expectations Survey, 4th Quarter 2001

SEVEN out of ten firms surveyed by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas viewed competition as a major stumbling block to growth. And over three-fourths of the firms cited insufficient demand as a limiting factor to business activities. There were 184 respondent firms representing different industries.

Marlear D. Tolosa, PDI Research

Peso, baht outperform peers

SINGAPORE—The Philippine peso and the Thai baht led the pack for Asia's best performing currencies in 2001 while Indonesia's rupiah and the Taiwan dollar were hurt the most.

The biggest currency drivers were the region's volatile political situation, economic growth prospects or the lack of them and the vacillations of the yen.

"This was one of the toughest years for Asian currencies," said Thio Chin Loo, currency strategist at BNP Paribas in Singapore.

"The year was marked by a sharp global economic downturn and political uncertainties," she said.

However, the central banks' vigilance in staving off market volatility and healthy current account surpluses kept the regional exchange rates relatively stable.

The performance was measured simply in terms of percentage change of the currencies from the previous year's close without taking into account funding costs, returns and liquidity risks.

All emerging Asian currencies were lower than their last year's closing levels. The Thai baht, however, turned out to be most resilient, having lost a mere 1.08 percent.

The currency was rattled earlier this year by political uncertainties caused by a new government taking office, a corruption trial of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra which ended with his acquittal, and sacking of former central bank chief Chatu Mongol Sonakul.

But it clambered to a higher ground in the fourth quarter as investors became less pessimistic about Thailand's political and economic outlook.

"A lot of it has been politically driven. Thaksin seems to be well-received by foreign investors. And toward the end of this year, we have seen a bit of a pickup in sentiment globally," said James Malcolm, currency strategist at JP Morgan in Singapore.

"That's why there were some relief rallies in the baht, mostly because foreign investors got out of short baht positions," he said.

Politics rather than economic fundamentals was the key factor that pulled the Philippine peso up from its troughs.

The peso, which lost 1.86 percent since end-2000, collapsed to a record low of 55.75 per dollar at the height of former President Joseph Estrada's political scandal that led to his ouster in January.

Then the new government of President Macapagal-Arroyo took over. Despite persisting problems facing the country, foreign investors perceived domestic political risks as being greatly reduced.

The rupiah has dropped by 8.33 percent from the end-2000 closing of 9,470 to the dollar, making it the worst performing currency in the region.

Indonesia is being crushed under a mountain of foreign debt which is estimated at $140 billion or about 100 percent of its gross domestic product.

Ethnic violence, political uncertainties and bleak macro economic fundamentals all added up to the rupiah being an unpopular currency, analysts said.

The Taiwan dollar, the second worst performing currency, was hit by a double whammy of the sliding yen and an economic weakness in the United States which badly hurt the island's growth.

Economists forecast that Taiwan's economy will shrink 2.36 percent this year, the first annual contraction since records began in 1962.

Although most currencies faced similar problems, analysts said the impact was pronounced in Taiwan because of the island's relatively high exposure to the US market and its currency's strong correlation to the yen.

Taiwan and Japan compete directly in most export markets. Exports account for more than 50 percent of the island's growth domestic product, with around 20 percent of the total exports going to the United States.

As for 2002, most analysts say they remain bearish on Asian currencies at least throughout the first quarter as uncertainty over the US recovery is likely to drag on.

"We think around the beginning of the year, people will be disappointed about the US growth prospect and that would have knock-on effects on inflows into Asian countries especially where foreigners are already overweight equities such as Korea," said JP Morgan's Malcolm.

Other main drivers of the market besides the US economic story will be the fate of the yen, central bank policy and regional politics. *Reuters*

Rural banks posted better loan portfolio in end-Sept.

BY DORIS C. DUMLAO

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas has reported an improvement in the loan portfolio of the rural banking system as of the third quarter of this year.

In a statement, the BSP said the non-performing loans of rural banks slid to 15.2 percent from 16.1 percent in the second quarter. They posted a 2.5-percent decline in the total loan portfolio but this was neutralized by the 1.1-percent slowdown in their non-performing loans.

"The improvement in the asset quality of rural banks is noteworthy. The average NPL ratio is steadily declining although it is still relatively high," BSP Deputy Governor Alberto Reyes said.

"Loan loss reserves have significantly increased. We have been urging rural banks to improve asset management and they have been responding," he added.

Unlike the big commercial banks, rural banks focus on micro financing.

Both regular rural banks and cooperative banks posted better performance during the third quarter compared to second quarter figures as their respective delinquency ratios fell to 15.1 percent and 15.5 percent from 16.1 percent and 17.7 percent, respectively.

It was also noted that the NPL loan coverage ratio of the rural banking system increased to 35.1 percent from 33 percent in the previous quarter. This was made possible by the 5.2-percent rise in loan loss reserves and 1.1-percent decline in actual NPLs. A year ago, the NPL cover of rural banks stood at only 25.6 percent.

Real and other property owned or acquired (Ropoa) of the sector rose to 9.1 percent of total assets from 8.8 percent in the second quarter as rural banks registered improved collections level.

Despite this, the BSP maintained that the overall asset quality has improved as the increase in the banks' non-performing asset reserves by 4.8 percent outweighed the 2-percent rise in actual NPLs, boosting the NPL coverage ratio to 19.3 percent from 18.8 percent in the previous quarter.

'Buy Filipino' movement seeks government support

THE NEWLY launched Buy Filipino Movement can succeed and make 78 million Filipino consumers the bedrock of local industries if key elements—including a strong government push—will be thrown behind it.

This has been suggested by export leader and Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) president Sergio R. Ortiz-Luis Jr. during the movement's launching by the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry recently.

Speaking before leaders of the Filipino-Chinese community, Ortiz-Luis said that quality goods that meet world standards, better packaging, wider access to consumers plus a strong government participation in the movement through favorable policies and buying practices, would surely make the movement fly.

Ortiz-Luis, who is also the head of the Philippine Exporters Confederation, said there was a big local market for quality goods. This, he said, the exporters have proven this year. To survive the global trade slump, exporters turned to the local market.

"More than in any other year in the past, our exporters held so many trade fairs in the Philippines this year. We had two or three a month at the World Trade Center. SM Megamall and the Greenhills mall hosted monthly trade fairs for different industries," he said.

Philexport records showed that a five-day national trade fair targeting bulk buyers held recently at the SM Megamall resulted in sales of P96.76 million. Stalls at a small exporters' bazaar held for four days at the Batasan Complex sold P2.7 million worth of goods.

"We discovered in all these trade exhibits that Filipinos buy export-quality products even if these are a bit more expensive than the ordinary items," he added.

Another crucial ingredient is the improvement in the packaging of local products. He lamented the fact that many manufacturers still use recycled packages even for high quality products. This practice continues even when the country has already developed a domestic packaging industry.

One of the reasons why previous attempts to promote the "Buy Filipino" movement failed, he explained, was the fact that retail outlets from Divisoria in Manila to Glorietta in Makati have not been patronizing Filipino products.

He traced the death of the domestic textile industry to the smuggling and selling in Divisoria of imported fabrics. The Philippine garments industry would have had a strong anchor if the textile industry has not died.

He expressed hope that with the Filipino-Chinese community now spearheading the movement, the bias against carrying Philippine goods would be reversed.

Quality goods packed beautifully and made easily accessible to end-buyers make the best formula for success.

The biggest obstacle to the movement that has to be hurdled is the attitude of the government both in terms of its policies and practices, Ortiz-Luis said. The last president who promoted buying Filipino goods was the late Carlos P. Garcia.

"The government is the biggest purchaser of goods and services. However, it has never made a policy to buy Filipino capital equipment and other materials if these are available," he said. ***Philexport News & Features***

Bristol-Myers Squibb Medical Director Wins Prestigious The Outstanding Young Men Award

Bristol-Myers Squibb (BMS) Medical Director Dr. Jaime C. Montoya was recently the recipient of The Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) Award for medicine in honor of his significant contributions in the field of infectious diseases. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo presented the award to Dr. Montoya last December 11, 2001 at the Malacañang Palace.

Now on its 43rd year, the TOYM Award gives national recognition to young men and women whose selfless dedication to their profession or vocation has resulted in notable contributions to the welfare of their countrymen and our country at large, as well as to the advancement of their respective fields of endeavor. While other awards give recognition purely to humanitarian work, the TOYM Award is uniquely given for outstanding leadership, excellence and contribution to humanitarian cause.

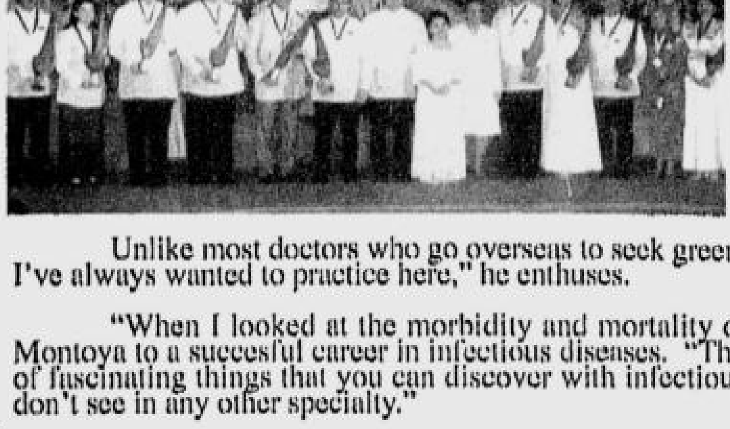
Dr. Montoya finished his medical degree from the University of the Philippines College of Medicine where he is also an associate professor in infectious diseases. He holds a Master's Degree in Science for Clinical Tropical Medicine from the University of London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. He is currently pursuing a doctorate in immunology also at the University of London.

He is a founding member of the Philippine Hospital Infection Control Society and is a member of the Philippine College of Physicians, Philippine Society for Microbiology and Infectious Diseases, Philippine College of Surgeons and is an examiner at the Philippine Board of Surgery.

As medical director for BMS, Dr. Montoya is on top of the company's clinical research, regulatory affairs and continuing professional education aspects. "I'm in charge with the product registration and issues with the Bureau of Food and Drugs (BFAD). I also handle clinical research related to the safety and efficacy issues of the drugs we have in the pipeline," he enthuses. "Continued professional education is mostly determining the symposia that will be conducted for doctors and other health-related professionals," he says.

Dr. Montoya's love for research is in perfect consonance with his work at BMS. The company's Pharmaceutical Research Institute is one of the world's most productive, respected and innovative research organizations. BMS is dedicated to discovering and developing innovative, cost-effective medicines that address significant unmet medical needs that extend and enhance human life.

As proof, Dr. Montoya's involvement in various researches on tuberculosis has created a significant impact on the state of the current management of TB as well as public health policies on tuberculosis control. Most notable of these is his chairmanship of the Philippine National Consensus for TB from 1997 to 2000. The consensus established the clinical standards for the diagnosis, treatment, prevention and control of tubercolosis in the country that is adopted and followed by physicians nationwide.



"I think this is the most challenging and most important work that I have done so far," says Dr. Montoya. "The work involved reviewing all of the published works, materials, literature, articles, journals and publications on TB and critically appraising them in order to put these as basis for recommendation. It's truly a tremendous task," he says.

Dr. Montoya reports that sadly, there have only been limited advances in TB research. He attributes this to the fact that tuberculosis affects only the developing countries. "For example, the reason why there's a lot of interest in HIV is because it is a problem in the developed countries, TB is not," he says.

"So even if TB affects a majority of the world's population, but does not affect the minority who holds most of the resources, then you can't have as much research."

However, Dr. Montoya adds that there have been advances mostly in the diagnostics part and drug therapy. "Most of the work that's being done on TB currently is in the area of diagnoses and the development of new vaccines, especially since the current vaccine called BCG has been proven to be not effective in the prevention of TB per se," he explains. "So we would like to develop the ideal vaccine that would really prevent TB and we're in the process of developing that."

Unlike most doctors who go overseas to seek greener pastures, Dr. Montoya decided to stay put in the country and serve his fellowmen. "From the time I graduated from medical school, I've always wanted to practice here," he enthuses.

"When I looked at the morbidity and mortality of the Philippines, majority of them are infectious in nature," he says. This discovery led Dr. Montoya to a succesful career in infectious diseases. "The reason why I chose infectious diseases is because it is a fertile area for research, there are a lot of fascinating things that you can discover with infectious diseases because we handle not just the patient but also the organisms, something which you don't see in any other specialty."

Aside from his work at BMS, Dr. Montoya is also a member of the advisory council of the Philippine Coalition Against Tuberculosis (PHILCAT), an umbrella organization of all government and non-government agencies involved in the campaign against TB. PHILCAT is the most active non-governmental organization working closely with the Department of Health as far as TB programs are concerned. He is also consultant in the Committee of German Doctors for Developing Countries, a non-profit, non-governmental organization whose main focus is the treatment of TB patients. Here, Dr. Montoya looks at complicated TB cases that range from treatment failures and multi-drug resistant TB cases.

Dr. Montoya says working for BMS has given him a tremendous advantage. "BMS provided me the other side of the coin and I got to see medicine not only from the medical point of view but also from the paramedical point of view. It actually widened my perspective as far as health care is concerned," he says. According to Dr. Montoya, this huge advantage is more evident when he evaluates the utility of certain drugs that BMS hopes to release in the Philippines.

Being the recipient of such a prestigious award, the question of why Dr. Montoya thinks he deserves the award becomes inevitable. "When I was interviewed by the TOYM panel, I said that I considered TOYM as a recognition not of the individual, but of the cause for which the individual is working for," he explains. "I believe that this award is a recognition of the problem of TB and if that is the way for us to give importance to the problem of TB, if it is the only means by which we can draw attention to the problem of TB in the country, then I think I truly deserve to win.

Dr. Montoya sums it all up succinctly, "This award is something much bigger, because it was given not just in honor of the person concerned but more importantly, for the cause which that person represents."

Indeed, with Dr. Montoya's skills and dedication, combined with the commitment and innovation of Bristol-Myers Squibb, the future of the country's health-care delivery system appears to be on solid ground.

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Philippine Airlines lays off 150 crew, ends 3 plane leases

PHILIPPINE Airlines Inc. is ending the lease of three Boeing 747-200 planes and laying off 150 probationary cabin crew amid the global aviation downturn, a spokesperson said yesterday.

"Basically, that is the only adjustment we have done on our operation since the Sept. 11 incident," PAL spokesperson Avelino Zapanta said.

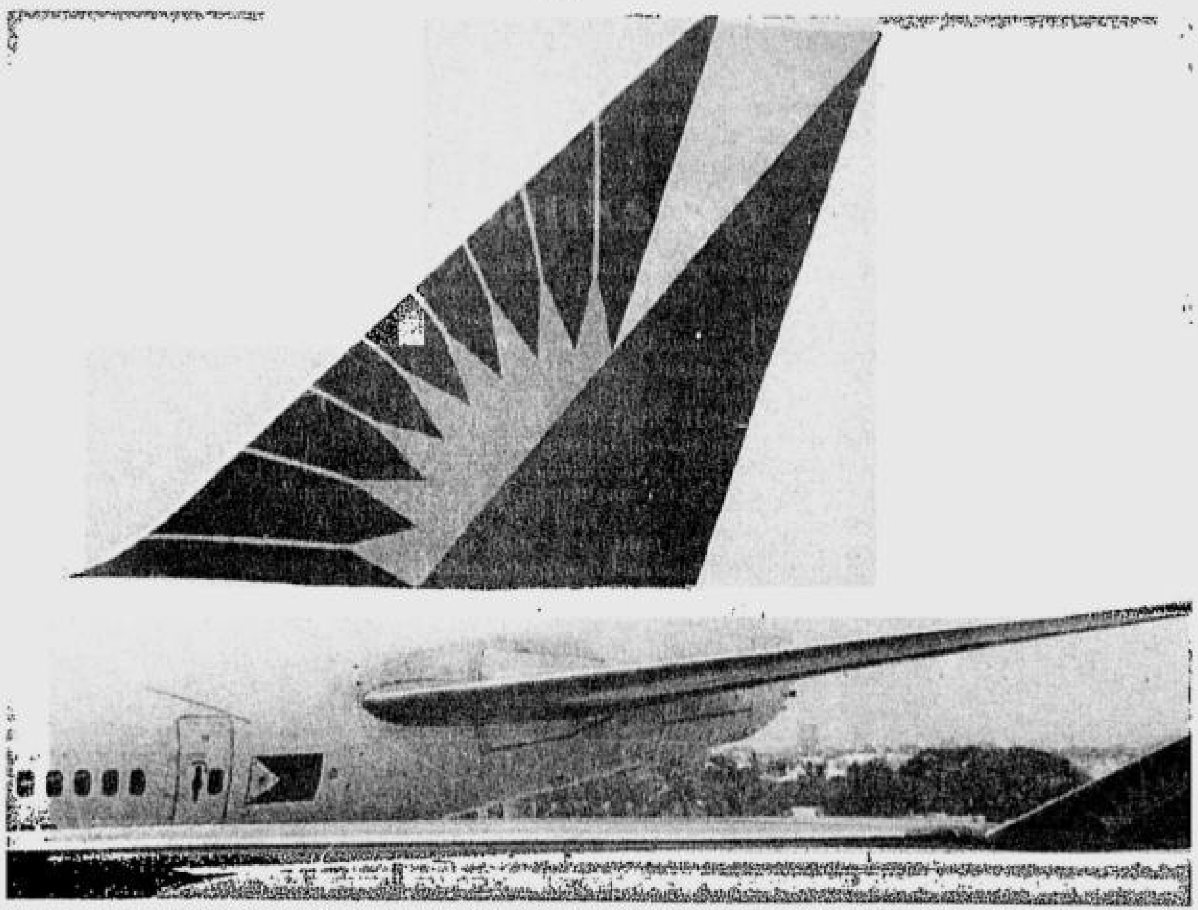
The cutbacks will not affect PAL's regular flights and services, Zapanta said, explaining the three leased planes were not flying regular routes, but were used as spares if other flights were disrupted.

The cabin attendants were working on probation hoping to be taken on full-time if PAL pushed ahead with plans to expand services to the United States and Europe.

However, Zapanta said the expansion plans were now on hold due to lower demand and sharp cost-cutting in the airline industry after the terror attacks in the US using hijacked planes on Sept. 11.

PAL would have to look at the market and see if further adjustments needed to be made after the Christmas holidays, he added.

Last month, PAL's president said the national flag-carrier might post a net loss in the current fiscal year largely due to the Sept. 11 terror attacks.



A BOEING 747-200 aircraft bearing the logo of Philippine Airlines Inc. taxis along a runway at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport. PAL, the country's biggest carrier, has announced plans to end the lease of three of these aircraft as it struggles througha global aviation slump.

DTI seeking to reel in retirees abroad

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry is stepping up its efforts to attract foreign retirees to settle in the Philippines by targeting large volume clients rather than individuals.

Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel Roxas II said the Philippines has a strong potential to be a retirement haven for foreigners but the government's marketing efforts have been largely ineffective.

Roxas said that despite the peace and order problem besetting the country, the Philippines remained an ideal site for retirees with its big number of real estate properties available for foreign retirees at affordable prices and low cost of living.

Roxas said the government would focus on going directly to major foreign companies and offering them retirement packages for their staff instead of wooing individual retirees.

This way, Roxas said, the government could directly access a larger pool of potential clients on a more cost-effective basis.

The Philippine Retirement Authority, also known as the Philippine Retirement Park System, is the government agency tasked to oversee the development and promotion of a retirement industry in the Philippines; encourage foreign investments in retirement projects, and regulate retirement communities in the country. It is directly under the Office of the President.

The PRA's retirement program gives Special Resident Retiree's Visa (SRRV) to foreigners and *balikbayans* to encourage them to spend their retirement years in the country.

Foreigners should be at least 50 years old and make a deposit or investment of at least $125,000 in the Philippines to be eligible for the visa. *Balikbayans* and Filipino overseas workers are exempted from the age requirement and are only obliged to make a deposit of $30,000 to enjoy the same privileges under the SRRV.

The benefits of the SRRV include duty and tax exemptions on $7,000 worth of imports; tax exemption and interest premium on bank deposits; and exemption from emigration clearance and reentry permit requirements.

MPC upbeat as it enters new year

By Abigail L. Ho

AILING property firm Metro Pacific Corp. is projecting a rosy future coming into the new year for its urban redevelopment project, the Bonifacio Global City, even as it faces debt woes and other challenges.

Metro Pacific chair Manuel Pangilinan said in a statement Friday he was confident that the Global City would be "the Philippines' most advanced urban environment" despite the numerous negative comments being hurled its way.

"Detractors have looked at the Bonifacio Global City and said, 'There's not much there.' But we say to them, 'Look at Makati at its third or fourth year of development.' What was there? By comparison, by any standard, we've done remarkably well," he said.

Pangilinan added that the Global City's development path was even better than that of other business districts as it was following a "two-decade growth plan" which included "the strictest planning and zoning ever introduced in this country."

He said new developments within 2002 would be the massive expansion of new restaurants in the Bonifacio Stopover Phase II as well as the completion of the mid-market Bonifacio Ridge Condominium and the International School Manila.

There would also be further announcements of corporate relocations and higher residential and visitor traffic to the Global City next year, he added.

Shell sees recovery next year, to consolidate share

By Ronnel W. Domingo

LOCAL oil giant Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. will consolidate its domestic market position in view of an expected recovery of the industry next year, company officials said.

Pilipinas Shell country chair Oscar Reyes said in a news briefing a slight pickup in oil demand was observed in October, giving hopes of a recovery projected to kick in by the second quarter of 2002.

"Demand for gasoline last October was one percent compared with the same month in 2000, while fuel oil demand was up by 5.4 percent," Reyes added.

He explained that there was a broad assessment within the industry that North America, particularly the United States, was poised for a rapid economic recovery, which would push up global oil demand.

"This is because there are already significant stimulus, like tax cuts and financing extended by the US government," Reyes said.

On the other hand, he said, 2002 would still be a tough year for local oil firms as there would be a lag in terms of recovery in developing countries.

"(But) we are hopeful that by the latter part of the year, we will also see signs of recovery in the country," Reyes said.

He said Pilipinas Shell was expecting to post a net profit of P2.5 billion by end-2001 against a net loss of P1.1 billion in 2000.

Also, Reyes said Pilipinas Shell was focusing next year on consolidating its market position.

He said the firm enjoyed a retail market share of over 36 percent, while it cornered 34.5 percent of the lubricants market.

In the same briefing, Pilipinas Shell vice president Reynaldo Gamboa said the firm's capital expenditures for 2002 would be mainly for the upgrading of service stations rather than putting up additional ones.

Gamboa explained that a move toward consolidation of present operations was part of the firm's preparations for its long-awaited initial public offering.

He stressed that Shell wanted to be able to do the IPO as soon as possible, but that the issue was a question of right timing.

"We are also not expanding our export business since local demand continues to be enough (to make us a viable business)," Gamboa added.

PLDT invests $10M in new software

By Abigail L. Ho

DOMINANT carrier Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. has invested almost $10 million in new software this year to upgrade its directory assistance and domestic and international operator-assisted long distance services.

PLDT senior vice president Rosalie Montenegro said PLDT was getting a lot of complaints from subscribers regarding unanswered calls and wrong information that the company decided to upgrade its system this year to improve its services.

For its directory assistance service, or "114," she said, PLDT bought a $6.1-million German software that made its in-house call center more efficient.

"The Varetis software has an intelligent voice response function that picks up calls even when all operators are busy. This helped lessen our unanswered calls. We get around 2.5 million calls a year. Now, 99.9 percent of calls are answered," she said.

She added that this function had helped operators save their voices because they had to take "around 500 calls a day."

"We're also doing cross-referencing or keeping the names of the former owners of certain phone numbers as well as the names of the numbers' new owners in our database," she said.

Some of the other new directory assistance services would be offered for a nominal fee to landline subscribers in the future, she said.

These new services include the "babysitting service" that takes calls for a subscriber when he is not home; the "subscriber data funnel" that cleans, modifies and deduplicates data; and the "reverse directory inquiry search" that enables subscribers to look for a person or an establishment's address by giving the operator the telephone number.

We have sole right to lend, banks say

By Elena R. Torrijos

BANKS, arguing that only they and quasi-banks should be allowed to lend, are opposing moves to enhance the regulation of some 7,000 lending investors.

A government official said in discussions for the economic summit held earlier this month that the Bankers Association of the Philippines voiced its opinion that lending investors should not be allowed to be in the business of lending.

The government official pointed out that it seemed that the banks were overlooking the fact that lending investors were already playing an active role in lending to the public to the same extent as microfinance institutions and pawnshops.

In line with its position, the BAP objected to the proposal of the Securities and Exchange Commission to make a bill providing for the regulation of lending investors a priority.

The SEC and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas had planned to push for a new law to transfer regulation over lending investors to the Department of Trade and Industry.

An amendment last year to the General Banking Act transferred jurisdiction over lending investors from the BSP to the SEC. However, there was no specific law authorizing the SEC to regulate these lending investors or promulgate rules governing their activities.

The justice department has recently ruled that the SEC has jurisdiction over lending investors not engaged in quasi-banking activities.

DISCLOSURES

PHILIPPINE Long Distance Telephone Co. will list 5 million preferred shares on Jan. 3.

***

RFM Corp. has disclosed that the closing date of the Cosmos transaction is set on Jan. 3. Payment of the full principal amount and interest shall be made on this date.

***

CITYSTATE Savings Bank Inc. will list 44.1 million common shares on Jan. 3.

***

UNION Cement Corp. has disclosed that it is unaware of any material that may have affected the value and trading of its securities on Thursday.

***

ROXAS Holding Inc. has repurchased 300,000 common shares at the price of 81 centavos each. Also, the change of its stock symbol from SGR to ROX will be reflected in the Philippine Stock Exchange's computer system on Jan. 3. ***Compiled by Ray Leyesa, PDI Research***

Philippine Stock Exchange

(As of Friday, December 28, 2001)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	5.5	5.5	4.6	5.4	25,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	57.5	57.5	57	57.5	448,700
China Banking Corp.	560	590	560	590	1,200
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	25	25.5	24.5	24.5	675,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	193	205	192	205	266,520
Philippine National Bank	67.5	67.5	67	67.5	142,000
Phil. Savings Bank	28.5	30	28.5	30	26,700
Security Bank Corp.	17	17.25	16.75	17.25	77,500
Union Bank of the Phil.	16	16.25	15.5	15.5	65,200
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1.1	1.1	1.04	1.04	40,000
First Abacus Financial	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	20,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	0.31	0.32	0.31	0.32	160,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1250	1250	1250	1250	10
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1050	1060	1040	1050	6,430
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	24	24	24	24	22,000
Diversified Fin. Network	4.8	6.2	4.8	6.1	43,000
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	0.38	0.39	0.38	0.38	2,970,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	650	680	650	680	1,327,140
Ipeople Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	20,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	30,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	3.3	3.5	3.2	3.5	99,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	417.5	420	417.5	417.5	27,790
Ivantage Corp.	0.45	0.5	0.45	0.5	40,000
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	24,400,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	22.75	23	22.75	22.75	7,300
Manila Electric Co. B	30	30	29.5	29.5	814,100
Petron Corp.	1.48	1.48	1.44	1.44	4,809,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.95	1	0.95	1	380,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.1	1.1	0.97	1.1	105,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.16	2.16	2.1	2.1	3,006,000
William, Gothong & Aboitiz	1.6	1.62	1.6	1.62	50,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	130,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.48	1.5	1.48	1.5	55,000
Union Cement Corp.	1	1	0.93	0.96	680,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	5.8	5.8	5.7	5.8	610,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	12	12.26	12	12.25	517,200
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	23.25	23.5	23.25	23.5	40,500
RFM Corp.	2.3	2.3	2.26	2.28	1,656,000
San Miguel Corp. A	42.5	43	42.5	43	8,300
San Miguel Corp. B	52.5	53	52.5	52.5	1,076,900
Universal Robina Corp.	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	2,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.4	0.4	0.38	0.38	260,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Atok-Big Wedge Co. Inc.	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	1,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.68	0.68	0.67	0.67	60,000
Ayala Corp.	4.65	4.7	4.6	4.7	3,671,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	1.58	1.58	1.58	1.58	100,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	11.5	11.75	11.5	11.75	1,200
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.79	0.79	0.78	0.78	530,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	34,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.9	2.1	1.9	2.1	41,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10.25	11	10.25	11	26,500
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.6	0.63	0.6	0.6	15,020,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	3,370,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	100,000
Ebecom Holdings Inc.	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.085	500,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	0.86	0.86	0.8	0.8	900,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	1,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	26	26	25.5	25.5	34,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	500,000
Guoco Holdings (Phils.)	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	10,000
House of Investments Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	70,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.62	1.62	1.62	1.62	34,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.7	0.71	0.7	0.71	4,270,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	21,890,000
Music Corp.	0.34	0.34	0.33	0.33	3,830,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	2,400,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	300,000
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	4.7	4.7	4.5	4.6	25,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.17	0.175	0.17	0.175	250,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	150,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Active Alliance Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	10,000
Federal Chemicals Inc.	6.8	7.2	6.8	7.2	50,000
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56	10,000
Matsushita Elec. Phil. Corp	5.40	5.8	5.4	5.8	6,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.68	0.7	250,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.08	0.1	0.08	0.1	3,000,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	14	14	14	14	62,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.54	0.56	0.54	0.56	63,940,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.53	0.53	0.48	0.51	100,000
Grand Plaza Hotel Corp.	23	25.5	23	25.5	210,400
Manila Jockey Club	10	10	10	10	22,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.13	0.2	0.13	0.2	900,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	23.75	23.75	23.75	23.75	400,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.-Pref	10	10	10	10	600
Equitable PCI Bank-War	1.84	1.86	1.74	1.74	312,000
Globe Tel. A - Warrants	460	480	460	480	660
Globe Telecom Hldg. (Pdr)	620	670	620	670	17,350
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10	10	10	10	1,400
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10	10	10	10	1,000
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	15	15	10	10	500
Philweb.Com Inc.-Warrants	0.005	0.005	0.0048	0.005	39,000,000
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	9.5	10.25	9	10.25	1,010,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	4.85	4.9	4.85	4.85	3,617,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	250,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	360,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.2	0.215	0.2	0.215	1,100,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	3,010,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.23	0.235	0.23	0.23	4,030,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	5,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.72	1.74	1.66	1.66	12,334,000
City & Land Developers	1.3	1.4	1.3	1.4	18,000
SM Development Corp.	0.9	1	0.9	1	3,360,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.3	6,241,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	2,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't.	3	3.1	2.9	3.1	97,000
Itogon-Suyoc Mines A	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	7,000,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	600,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.0038	0.0038	0.0038	0.0038	1,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	57,000,000
Polar Mines & Dev't Corp.	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	1,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	220,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.013	0.014	0.013	0.014	2,800,000
Interport Res.	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	2,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	21,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	75,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.22	0.25	0.22	0.25	20,000

	SHARES	VALUE (P)
Banks & Fin Svc	1,954,260	115,734,915.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	244,573,840	1,130,497,130.00
PRO	34,325,000	83,408,150.00
Mining	68,917,000	793,900.00
OIL	100,820,000	614,400.00
GRAND TOTALS:	450,591,100	1,331,048,375.00

AVERAGES		
Banks & Fin Svc	505.02	UP 8.20
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,579.39	UP 21.50
PRO	501.30	DOWN 0.81
Mining	1,011.29	UP 2.79
OIL	1.93	DOWN 0.03
All Shares Index	682.87	DOWN 0.51
Composite	1,168.08	UP 15.22

NO. OF ADVANCES: 50; NO. OF DECLINES: 30; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 37;
NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 117; NO. OF TRADES: 2,487

CURRENCIES

Dec, 28, 2001

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.132375	1.000000	51.4040
Japan	Yen	0.008600	0.007595	0.3904
United Kingdom	Pound	1.645793	1.453400	74.7106
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.145228	0.128251	6.5926
Switzerland	Franc	0.674474	0.595628	30.6177
Canada	Dollar	0.709019	0.626135	32.1858
Singapore	Dollar	0.610939	0.539520	27.7335
Australia	Dollar	0.574226	0.507099	26.0669
Bahrain	Dinar	3.003808	2.652661	136.3574
Kuwait	Dinar	N/A	N/A	N/A
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.301959	0.266660	13.7074
Brunei	Dollar	0.610939	0.539520	27.7335
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000109	0.000096	0.0049
Thailand	Baht	0.025596	0.022604	1.1619
UAE	Dirham	0.308381	0.272331	13.9989
Korea	Won	0.000858	0.000758	0.0390
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.883100	45.3949
Germany	Mark	0.511292	0.451522	23.2100
France	Franc	0.152450	0.134628	6.9204
Netherlands	Guilder	0.453780	0.400733	20.5993
Austria	Schilling	0.072672	0.064177	3.2990
Belgium	Franc	0.024789	0.021891	1.1253
Italy	Lire	0.000516	0.000456	0.0234
Finland	Markka	0.168188	0.148527	7.6349
Portugal	Escudo	0.004988	0.004405	0.2264
Spain	Peseta	0.006011	0.005308	0.2729
Luxemburg	Franc	0.024789	0.021891	1.1253
Ireland	Punt	1.269738	1.121306	57.6396

Euro debut upstaged by tidal waves of change

BRUSSELS—The changeover to the euro at midnight on Monday, heralded as the greatest monetary conversion ever, has been elbowed into a quiet corner of the world stage by the enormity of events unfolding around it.

At that hour, more than 300 million people in the 12 countries of the euro zone will begin saying goodbye to their national currencies and hello to their new legal tender as automatic cash machines dispense crisp euro banknotes.

But as momentous as it is, the euro changeover pales against the shock of events such as the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States, the subsequent war on Afghanistan in search of the perpetrators and backers, and the resulting economic tidal wave that circled the globe.

The attacks triggered a domino effect of unheard-of proportions.

Economies around the world, particularly in Europe, were shaken.

Fears spread of more, and more sinister terrorist attacks, possibly chemical or biological, perhaps against Washington's friends and allies, fed by a rash of anthrax-laced letters.

Old squabbles were forgotten, at least temporarily, as Europe and Nato closed ranks in support of the US.

The fight against terrorism—military, financial and security-wise—assumed global proportions, seizing and holding center stage as the embryonic euro crept quietly toward its cash debut.

European politicians hailed the euro, already in virtual commercial use for two years, as the buffer that protected the continent's economies from even worse post-Sept. 11 damage. *AFP*

Millions from Europe to America await the euro

PARIS—From the Indian Ocean to the Caribbean, hundreds of millions of people, their lives divided by history, language and culture, are nonetheless poised to begin buying, borrowing and selling in the same currency—the euro.

More than a simple monetary transition, the euro's entry into general circulation on Jan. 1 heralds profound—perhaps even unsettling—changes in the lives of consumers from the French departments of Reunion in the Indian Ocean to Gaudaloupe in the Caribbean, as well as 304 million people living in the heart of Europe.

Thirty years in the making, the euro will have its debut as cash in 12 members of the European Union as well as in an assortment of departments, principalities and republics around the world.

Euro banknotes will also be immediately available in two Japanese airports, and tourists from around the world will have already brought sample euro coin kits back home with them.

By the end of February, the euro will have driven out centuries-old national currencies that in many cases—notably Germany and Italy—have become venerated emblems of prosperity, democracy and stability.

For a while, simple, everyday purchases—a pint of Guinness in Dublin, a bag of croissants in France, a souvlaki sandwich in Athens—could become complex, cumbersome transactions.

New words will have to be learned. European language watchdogs have already laid down guidelines for how people in their countries should write and talk about the new currency.

Not surprisingly, recent polls have revealed that many in Europe are approaching the Jan. 1 changeover with a deep sense of foreboding, one that could cause them to spend less and thereby undermine government efforts to shore up steadily sagging economic growth in Europe.

A survey carried out by the French institute Ipsos and released Dec. 10 found that 40 percent of those living in the 12-nation "euro zone" saw the new currency as introducing more inconveniences in their lives than advantages.

A day later the Wall Street Journal Europe said 52 percent of respondents to a poll it commissioned would prefer to retain the national currencies.

In the central French city of Lyon, 42-year-old Frederic Joulia, a post office official and committed European, has been trying for months to allay the fears of working class residents in a nearby public housing complex.

Many of those in the area are illiterate, elderly, handicapped or struggling financially. Without bank accounts, they do most of their business in cash and park their savings with the post office.

Joulia says his clients in particular fear that in using the euro they will somehow be cheated of the little money they have to spend on daily essentials—an anxiety also apparent in the Wall Street Journal Europe survey. *AFP*

Japan's jobless rate hits 5.5 %

TOKYO—Japan's unemployment rate hit a record high for a third straight month in November, reaching 5.5 percent as the nation continued to shed jobs in one-time mainstay sectors including manufacturing and construction, the government said Friday.

Unable to wrest itself out of a 10-year downturn, Japan has slipped into its third recession in a decade. Joblessness has been inching up steadily to new records since July, when the rate hit 5 percent—then the highest since the government began keeping track in 1953.

It hit 5.4 percent in October after reaching 5.3 percent in September.

The unemployment problem is expected to drag on for months, if not years, as Japan gropes to find new sources for growth while reining in old-style public works spending to slow a ballooning public deficit.

The nation can no longer count on exports to drive growth. Hit by the global slowdown that has worsened since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, Japanese companies are seeing profits slide and resorting to job cuts that were shunned in a corporate culture based on worker loyalty and job stability.

The seriousness of the problem is underlined in the rising unemployment rate for men at 5.8 percent in November, a record high and unchanged from October, the labor statistics office said.

The unemployment rate for women stood at 4.9 percent, up 0.1 from a month ago.

"Japan's system of lifetime employment is no longer holding up in these global times," said Ken-ichi Imai, chair of the Stanford Japan Center in Kyoto. "The pain is going to grow."

Japan needs to address emerging social needs in medicine, education and welfare to make it easier to create new businesses such as day-care and health care for working families, Imai said.

The unemployment rate in the United States now stands at a six-year-high 5.7 percent, marking the first time in about three years that the US jobless rate has risen above the Japanese rate.

The last time the US unemployment rate was higher than the Japanese rate was in October 1998, when it stood at 4.5 percent and Japan's was 4.3 percent.

Yasuo Fukuda, the top government spokesperson, said growing unemployment underlined the costs of the reforms being tackled by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi. *AP*

US economy to claw back early next year

WASHINGTON—The US economy will claw its way out of recession early in 2002 with or without new stimulus measures from Congress, although less vigorously than hoped for and at greater cost in terms of lost jobs, economic analysts say.

A bid by the Bush administration and Congress to craft a package of measures worth $75 billion to $100 billion collapsed in acrimony last week amid a finger-pointing debate whether tax cuts or more spending would be most helpful.

The chances of breathing life into it are seen as remote, with Congress not even scheduled to resume business until Jan. 23.

But there is scant mourning for shelved plans for fiscal stimulus, which could have spurred demand through a range of measures like accelerated depreciation for equipment purchases, rebates for low-income Americans and somewhat lower middle-income tax brackets.

The White House itself tried to put the best face on its inability to reach a deal with lawmakers, with President George W. Bush saying last Friday that a package might not even be needed.

After Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill spent months unsuccessfully trying to persuade lawmakers that added stimulus was vitally needed to get the economy, already weak and further shaken by the Sept. 11 attacks, safely back on track, Bush said there was ample time to weigh the economy's health when Congress resumed in January. O'Neill, the administration's point man on stimulus, said at the beginning of the process that if it failed, it would be his responsibility.

"The stimulus package was all very nebulous anyway, so its failure probably means a constraint on the degree of recovery rather than on its actual timing," said economist David Orr of Wachovia Corp. in Charlotte, N.C. *Reuters*

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L-714 SFDM Lincold St., QC V-Lot Call 928-1469

L-4000m² Baler St., V-Lot QC P9,500T Call 928-1469

L-308m² Visaya Ave QC 4 Lease Call 928-1469

L-903 Mindanao Ave V-Lot 4 Lease Call 928-1469

L-3300 Alng Edsa V-Lot QC 928-1469

•PROJ 6 442m² 9263307•

RIZAL

Cuidad Del Sol Taytay Lots 58.50m² & Up 658-2115/16

Taytay Rzl Comm'l Ind'l 108m² 658-2115/16

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L-35 Hectare Bulacan P20M V-Lot Call 928-1469

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BFRV Big 3BR2TB 1.8M or 480T Dwn AsmBal 8753350

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NEAR SSH'WAY MLA BNew/4stry/4br/3tb/grge/maid P3.035M up 8903461 loc 34

SAMPALOC Townhse 3M 7139232 • 09198076112

MANDALUYONG

Wack² Royal Mansion @5M Studio w/Pkng 633-7601/03

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SAN JUAN

AnapolisGhills 1BR 7122002

Platinum 1 Annapolis 176 FA 17th Flr. 634-1212

FACTORY/WHSE

W/ 3phase new 8.5M neg Rush owner 259-6493

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L300 T7411356

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PUGS wrinkled 3725231

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LEGAL NOTICE

pNotice is hereby given that the estate of the late spouses DOMINADOR T. MONTALES and JOSEFINA R. MONTALES has been extrajudicially settled among their heirs as per Doc. No. 138; Page No. 106; Book No. 11; Series of 2001 under Notary Public Atty. Antonio G. Avellano of Pasig City
(PDI-Dec. 29, 2001, Jan. 5 & 12, 2002)

PERSONAL

THANK YOU JESUS
THANK YOU HOLY SPIRIT
THANK YOU MAMA MARY
FBRSOMERA

FOR IMMEDIATE HIRING

QUALITY CONTROL AND SAFETY SUPERVISOR

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CALAMBA STEEL CENTER, INC.
Barangay Saimsim, Calamba, Laguna

Republic of the Philippines
PROVINCE OF ALBAY
Municipality of Sto. Domingo
OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL MAYOR
Agrarian Reform Communities Development Project

INVITATION TO BID

Date: December 29, 2001
World Bank/IBRD Loan No. 4100 PR

The Government of the Philippines has received a loan from the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development towards the cost of Agrarian Reform Communities Development Project (ARCDP) and intends to apply part of the funds to cover eligible payments under the Contract No. __________ for the Construction of an Integrated Warehouse with Solar Drier at San Andres and Salvacion, Sto. Domingo, Albay. Bidding is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined the guidelines:

Procurement under IBRD Loan and IDA Credits.

The Municipality of Sto. Domingo, Albay and implementing partner of the DAR for ARCDP invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the construction of the following subproject.

Description of the Project: Construction of a One Unit Warehouse with Solar Drier at Barangay Bical, Salvacion, Sto. Domingo, Albay with the ff. items of work:

BICAL, SALVACION MPC

ITEM NO.	WORK BREAKDOWN STRUCTURE	QUANTITY
1	Column and Column Footing	26.32 cu.m.
2	Wall and Wall Footing	63.81 cu.m.
3	Beams, Slabs and Parapets	22.15 cu.m.
4	Slab on Fill	12.00 cu.m.
5	Stair and Canopy	5.86 cu.m.
6	Plumbing and Septic Tank	Lump Sum
7	Doors and Windows	Lump Sum
8	Painting	650.00 sq.m.
9	Electrical Works	Lump Sum
10	Solar Drier	42.00 cu.m.
11	Forms and Scaffoldings	8,200.00 bd.ft.
SPL	Temporary Facility	1.00 Unit

BID SECURITY : P 50,000.00
Bid Closing Date : **January 29, 2002 - 10:00 AM**

MINIMUM EQUIPMENTS REQUIRED:
One Bagger Concrete Mixer, Concrete Vibrator, Steel Bar Cutter.

Description of the Project: Construction of a One Unit Warehouse with Solar Drier at Barangay San Andres, Sto. Domingo, Albay with the ff. items of work:

SAN ANDRES MPC

ITEM NO.	WORK BREAKDOWN STRUCTURE	QUANTITY
1	Column and Column Footing	26.32 cu.m.
2	Wall and Wall Footing	63.81 cu.m.
3	Beams, Slabs and Parapets	22.15 cu.m.
4	Slab on Fill	12.00 cu.m.
5	Stair and Canopy	5.86 cu.m.
6	Plumbing and Septic Tank	Lump Sum
7	Doors and Windows	Lump Sum
8	Painting	650.00 sq.m.
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10	Solar Drier	42.00 cu.m.
11	Forms and Scaffoldings	8,200.00 bd.ft.
SPL	Temporary Facility	1.00 Unit

BID SECURITY : P 50,000.00
Bid Closing Date : **January 29, 2002 - 10:00 AM**

MINIMUM EQUIPMENTS REQUIRED:
One Bagger Concrete Mixer, Concrete Vibrator, Steel Bar Cutter.

A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested bidders at above office starting **January 7, 2002**, 8:00-5:00 PM upon payment of a non-refundable fee of one thousand pesos (P1,000.00) only.

A Pre-Bid Conference will be held on **January 15, 2002** at the Office of the Municipal Mayor, Sto. Domingo, Albay.

All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in a form of cash, Certified Check, Bank draft, or its equivalent in a freely convertible currency, and must be delivered to the Office of the Mun. Mayor, Sto. Domingo, Albay on or before the Bid closing date. Bids will be opened promptly on the above bid closing date in the presence of participating bidders or representatives who choose to attend.

The PBAC-ARCDP reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defect or formality, assume no obligation whatsoever to compensate indemnity to the contractor/bidder for any expense that they incur in the preparation of bid and to accept the bid deemed to be the lowest evaluated, responsive and complying bid.

HON. HERBIE AGUAS
Mun. Mayor/Chairman-PBAC-ARCDP

(PDI – Dec. 29, 2001)

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
NATIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY

December 14, 2001

RE-INVITATION FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The National Housing Authority is inviting interested contractors who have completed similar works (at least 50% of Estimated Contract Cost) within the last three (3) years and accredited with PCAB/IAC, to bid for the contracts listed as follows:

	Bid Package	Scope of Works	Project Cost (Million)	PCAB Category	IAC Classification
1.	Lingap Para sa Kawal Pilipino Housing Project, Negros Occidental	Construction of 10 houses	P1.40	C	Small "B" for Building
2.	Palo Housing Proj. (Remaining Works), Palo, Leyte	Land Development	P2.20	C	Small "B" for Roads

A. Eligibility Statement forms, bid documents/plans as well as other information are available at the Office of the BAC Secretariat, 2nd Floor, NHA Main Building, Diliman, Quezon City upon submission of the following: a) Letter of Intent; b) PCAB/IAC License; c) Certificate of Completion/Acceptance and Contract Agreement of completed similar project; and d) Presentation of above-cited original documents for authentication purposes.

B. Payment of non-refundable fee of P500.00 per set shall be received only from authorized representatives.

C. Did deposits shall be in the form of cash, Manager's or Cashier's Check.

D. Deadline of submission of LOI/issuance of bid documents is on **January 2, 2002**. Pre-Bid Conference will be held on **January 3, 2002** at 10:00 a.m. at the Operations Center, 3rd Floor, NHA Main Building.

E. NHA reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive formally any minor defect thereon, and accept the offer most advantageous to the Government.

(Sgd.) **JOSEPH PETER S. SISON**
Assistant General Manager
Chairman, Bid and Award Committee

(PDI - Dec 18 & 29, 2001)

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JUANITA L. MA. COLL

Peacefully joined her Creator
on December 26, 2001 at the age of 86.

She is survived by her daughters **Elsa**, **Vicky** and **Nika**, daughter-in-law **Precy Santos**, sons-in-law **Jerry Bacalzo** and **Chito Sarmiento**; grandchildren, great grandchildren, nephews and nieces, sisters-in-law, brothers-in-law, other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Marian Memorial Chapels, Marcos Highway, Antipolo City.

Cremation will be on Sunday, December 30, 2001, at the Loyola Crematorium, Marikina City, after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

DEO C. BAUTISTA

of Garden City Subdivision
Sucat, Parañaque City
Passed away on December 27, 2001
at the age of 84.

Children and grandchildren request
the pious readers to pray for
the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at Holy Trinity
. Memorial Chapel in Sucat, Parañaque City.

Interment will be on Monday,
December 31, 2001 at 9:30 AM.

Our Dearly Beloved

RUFINO LEGASPI PALABYAB, M.D.

U.P. Medicine Class 1938
of San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan and Fairview, Quezon City
Peacefully returned to his Creator on December 27, 2001 at the age of 87.

His loving wife **Cleotilde (Tinding)**; children and in-laws **Efren** and **Clare**, **Oscar** and **Tatish**, **Helen**, **Gerry** and **Lina**, **Dennis** and **Bing**, **Nestor**, **Michael** and **Beth**; grandchildren **Addie**, **Anna**, **Ian** and **Isa**, **Toby** and **Aaron**, **Mik**, **Mariquit**, **Ligaya**, **Isagani**, **Dalisay**, **Ana Amihan**, **Jose Ma.** and **Mutya**, and **Botchsky**; brothers **Sergio** and **Sotero**; sisters-in-law, other relatives and friends pray for his eternal rest.

His remains will lie in state at Premier Suite I, Loyola Memorial Chapels, Guadalupe, Makati City up to 12:00 NN on December 29, 2001 and will be transferred to San Jose del Monte, Bulacan thereafter.

Interment will be on Sunday, December 30, 2001 at Sarmiento Memorial Park in San Jose del Monte, Bulacan after the 1:00 p.m. Mass at St. Joseph Parish Church.

We've added another
dignified service to keep the memory
of your departed loved ones.

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"GOD SAW YOU WERE GETTING TIRED AND CURE WAS NOT TO BE SO HE PUT HIS ARMS AROUND YOU AND WHISPERED - COME WITH ME! WITH TEARFUL EYES WE WATCHED YOU AND SAW YOU FADING AWAY ALTHOUGH WE LOVED YOU DEARLY WE COULD NOT MAKE YOU STAY. A GOLDEN HEART STOPPED BEATING WORKING HANDS WERE PUT TO REST. GOD BROKE OUR HEARTS TO PROVE TO US.... HE ONLY TAKES THE BEST."

In Loving Memory

On the First Death Anniversary of

DR. MANUEL C. FERNANDEZ SR.

Founder and Past President of Makati Medical Center

Who peacefully joined his Creator
on December 29, 2000

His family and loved ones request relatives and friends to join them in praying for the eternal repose of his soul.

Holy Masses shall be offered today at various churches.

"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies, and whoever believes in Me will never die."

John 11:25-26

Message of Thanks

We,
the family of the late

COL. JESUS LACHICA VER (RET.)

PMA CLASS '44

wish to thank all of you who, by way of your presence, prayers, thoughts and flowers, offered us solace and comfort.

We also thank you for joining us in remembering them, who in so many ways, have touched our lives forever.

God bless you!

In Loving Memory
On the 3rd Death Anniversary of

EDWIN GO CID

(August 10, 1957 - December 29, 1998)

Masses will be offered at the following churches:

St. Andrew Parish, *Baccara, Ilocos Norte*	5:30 AM
San Sebastian Cathedral, *Tarlac City*	5:00 PM
St. Paul of the Cross Parish, *SSS Village, Marikina City*	6:00 AM 6:00 PM
Immaculate Conception Parish, *Concepcion, Marikina City*	7:00 AM 6:30 PM
Parish of Our Lady of the Abandoned, *San Roque, Marikina City*	5:30 AM 6:00 PM
Nativity of Our Lady Parish, *Industrial Valley, Marikina City*	6:00 AM 6:00 PM
St. John Mary Vianney Parish, *Antipolo City*	5:30 PM
Sta. Maria della Strada, *Katipunan Road, Quezon City*	6:00 AM 6:00 PM
Monasterio de Sta. Clara, *Katipunan Road, Q.C.*	6:15 AM

The family would like to thank relatives, friends and readers who continue to pray for his eternal repose.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

For the needs of your departed Loved Ones, the following establishments can help you.

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Sucat Branch: 8187 Dr. A. Santos Ave., Sucat, Parañaque City
Tels. 826-1376; 826-9682; (0915) 712-1220
SANTUARIO DE SAN ANTONIO PARISH
Forbes Park, Makati City;
Tel. Nos. 843-8838/30; Fax No. 843-9223
SANTUARIO DE SAN JOSE PARISH
East Greenhills, Mandaluyong City;
Telefax 724-4139; 725-2044
ST. ALPHONSUS MARY DE LIGOURI PARISH
Magallanes Village, Makati City;
Tels. 852-8228; 852-7284
ST. MARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL
16-15 G. Tuazon cor. Loreto St., Sampaloc, Manila
Tels. 749-3679; 781-1772
ST. PETER FUNERAL HOMES
296 Quezon Ave., Quezon City;
Tels. 372-5084; [illegible]10-9286/87
VERONICA MEMORIAL HOMES
Official NBI Morgue 51[illegible] A Arnaiz St., Pasay City
Tels. 831-3797; 844-7846; 843-1801; 845-4836
WELINGTON FUNERAL SERVICES
1511 Gen. Luna St., Paco, Manila;
Tels. 522-8846; 522-9438; 400-5394

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS: ❶ Copy of Death Certificate ❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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People, Events & Products

ARIES B. ESPINOSA, Assistant Editor
aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

MasterCard concludes highly successful priceless passions promotion

MASTERCARD International has concluded its highly successful Priceless Passions promo in the Philippines. The winning entries were picked out in a simple raffle draw that had the participation of executives from several local member financial institutions.

The Priceless Passions promo was conducted for three months, from June 15 to Sept. 15. More than 100,000 entries were received from MasterCard cardholders from all over the Philippines. Based on the number of entries received, Priceless Passions was an even bigger success than last year's MasterCard promotion, called Priceless Moments, conducted from Sept. 1 to Dec. 31 that attracted more than 50,000 entries.

"We are pleased with the huge success of our Priceless Passions promo. We had hoped to at least duplicate the success of the previous promo but the response we received exceeded our expectations. We thank our MasterCard cardholders for their constant active participation in all our initiatives. We also acknowledge with thanks our member financial institutions for their support and close coordination in this promotion," said Judith Dayrit, MasterCard International-Philippines director for marketing and member relations at the raffle draw activity.

13 MasterCard cardholders won cash and consolation prizes worth over P1.4 million in the Priceless Passions promo. The first prize was P500,000 in cash; the second prize was P300,000; and the third prize was P200,000. All cash prizes will be credited to the winning cardholders' MasterCard accounts.

The following were given away as consolation prizes: a family trip for four to Boracay and two trips for two to Boracay (inclusive of airfare, boat transfers and breakfast); a Smart Siemens SL 45 cellphone; a Compaq Ipaq Computer; a Coleman Outdoor Adventure Package (consisting of a tent, sleeping bag, cooler, stove and lantern) and four Powerbooks gift certificates worth P5,000 each.

FIRST INQUIRER INTER-COLLEGIATE DEBATING CHAMPIONSHIP

The Philippine Daily Inquirer, in coordination with the University of the Philippines Debate Society (UPDS), will host the first Inquirer Inter-Collegiate Debating Championships (IIDC) from Feb. 22 to 26 at UP Diliman. More than 300 of the best and brightest students from 25 universities nationwide will participate in the event, which will be the first to use the Asian Parliamentary debate format. The tournament, which is part of the Inquirer's reading campaign, aims to promote critical thinking and awareness of issues among the youth through the art of debate. Signing the memorandum of agreement are Inquirer president Alexandra Prieto-Romualdez and UPDS president Regina Ozoa. Witnessing the event are (from left) UPDS officers Charlene Tan, Philip Arejola, Ted Tinedo, Pamela Manuel, Inquirer corporate relations manager Celine Madamba, Darlyn Sandra Ty, Tatsuyuki Munetomo and Trina Firmalo.

SANYO AWARDS MICRODATA

Sanyo Electric Co. of Osaka, Japan recently held its Asia Sales Seminar 2001 in Bangkok. The seminar was attended by 75 delegates representing 14 countries. During the event, Sanyo awarded Microdata Systems and Management Inc. for posting the highest sales growth for 2000. Microdata, Sanyo's authorized distributor of LCD Multimedia Projectors, has shown that there is a growing market for these products. Sanyo is bullish about the Philippine economy and has plans to expand its operations here. Shown is Mariano Ang, Jr. (left), president of Microdata Systems, being congratulated by Sato, D., general manager of Sanyo.

Nampap earmarks growth in plumbing profession in the Philippines

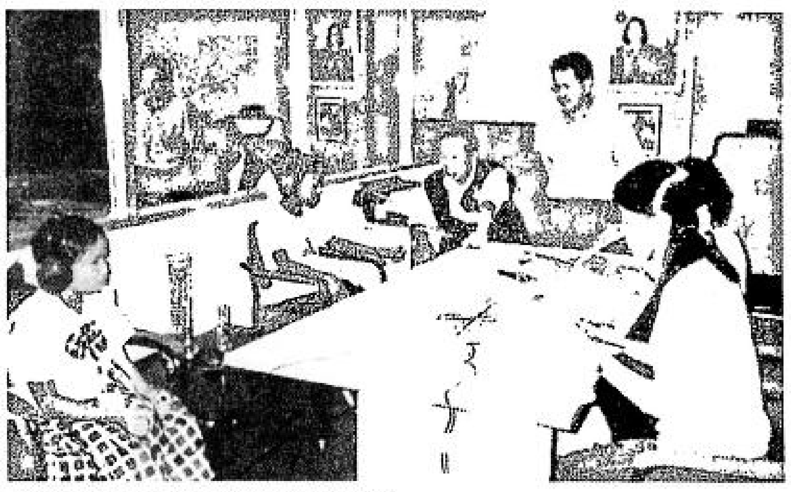
RESIDENTIAL houses, churches, and bridges are more than edifices. These are human structures which shapes and forms societies and global communities. It provides for man's need for shelter, affinity and community development. And within the walls and beams made of complex systems of wood, concrete and wiring networks are plumbing installations.

The use of plumbing systems in the Philippines can be traced back in the early 17th century when Spanish friar engineers used plumbing installations in the construction of Intramuros, famously known as The Walled City and dubbed then as a "model community". Soon after, plumbing was also incorporated in villas and mansions.

The plumbing trade in the country evolved into a technical profession through the years, and its biggest break came in with the birth of the National Master Plumbers Association of the Philippines Inc. (Nampap), which spearheaded various programs for the development of the plumbing profession and industry.

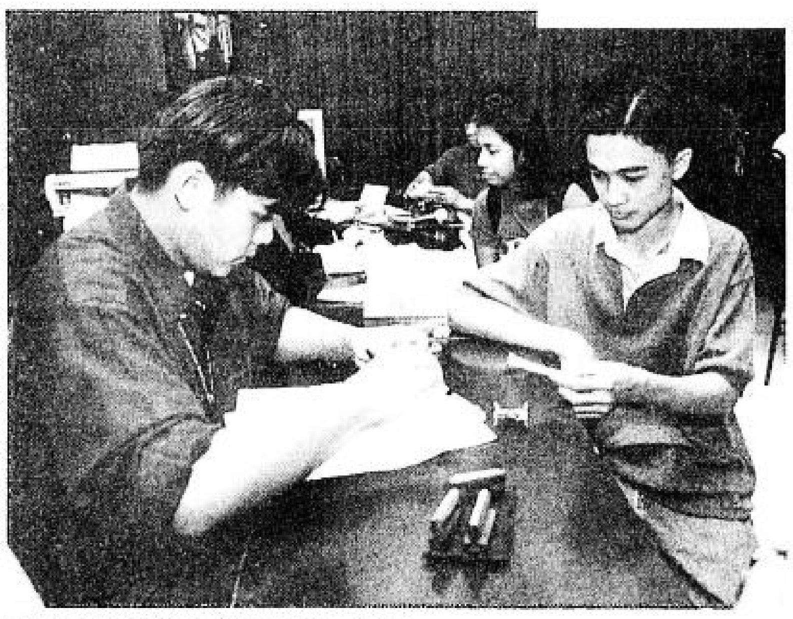
Now on its 66th year and with over 3,000 members comprised of plumbing professionals, engineers and contractors nationwide, Nampap has continuously been at the forefront in establishing programs and plans for the upliftment of the country's plumbing profession.

Affiliated with the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (Iapmo), Nampap had gained exceptional achievements in the advent of Republic Act No. 1378, otherwise known as the "Plumbing Law of the Philippines," and later on, at the passing of the "National Plumbing Code of the Philippines". Updated and approved, it has now been adopted as the reference code of plumbers pursuant to the National Building Code. Nampap also played a significant role in passing a law creating the National Waterworks and Sewerage Authority (Nawasa). Celebrating its anniversary this year, Nampap held a National Convention recently at Manila Midtown Hotel.



'OPLAN SAGIP PANDINIG'

The Rotary Club of Parañaque Central (RCPC), District 3830 conducts 'Oplan Sagip Pandinig'. Shown are Dr. Nene Repizo, PP Aks Sebial and Dr. Rene Sarmiento conducting ear examinations on students. Studies reveal that the City of Parañaque is the 'Deaf Capital' of the country. RCPC launched the project to identify, rehabilitate and prevent deafness and hearing impairment among elementary school children. Oplan Sagip Pandinig is a pilot project of RCPC led by its president Ricardo T. Chua district governor Ernie Salas.



PEOPLE WHO RELY ON CAP

Pre-need industry pioneer College Assurance Plan (CAP) adheres to its mission of service by educating more Filipinos on the value and importance of acquiring insurance, said CAP SVP Jaime B. Dizon. For years, CAP has been sending Filipino children through school, with more than 100,000 scholars and over P6.1 billion of their tuition paid as of Sept. 30. Dizon added that people prefer CAP because of its magnitude of service and stability, marking the largest trust fund in the pre-need industry. Shown are CAP scholars getting ready for the upcoming semester in the recently held enrollment at the CAP Building in Makati City.

Clips

Olca-Taal alumni homecoming

ALL alumni of Our Lady of Caysasay Academy-Taal, Batangas are invited to a grand alumni homecoming on Dec. 30, Sunday. High school batch 1988 is the sponsor of this event. For more information, call Eric Barret, M.D. at 0917-4057167.

Yuletide treat at the Manor

CAMP John Hay invites everyone to be part of a year-end celebration at the Manor, the newest hotel in Baguio. Slated on Dec. 31 are back-to-back events: a violin show by John Lesaca, a concert by the Silk Band, and an international food buffet. Tickets for the event are available at the Manor front desk and at the Camp John Hay Golf Clubhouse. For more information call (074) 446-0231.

China Bank open on Monday

CHINA Bank's selected branches will be open on Dec. 31. Clients can also transact at any China Bank ATM or other BancNet/Megalink ATMs nationwide with their TellerCard and do phone banking through the TellerPhone at 885-5888 in Metro Manila or from elsewhere in the Philippines through the toll-free no. 1-800-1888-5888 24 hours a day. The following branches are Sto. Cristo, Tutuban Center (9 a.m. to noon), SM Megamall (9 a.m. to 1 p.m.), SM North Edsa, SM Southmall, Commonwealth, Cainta-Sta. Lucia and SM Fairview (10 a.m. to 2 p.m.) Open provincial branches are Cabanatuan-Maharlika, Laoag (9 a.m. to 12 noon), Cebu-SM City, Cebu-Lapu-Lapu and Cavite-SM Bacoor (10 a.m. to 2 p.m.).

SJA's diamond jubilee

ST. James Academy Alumni Association Inc. of Malabon City will hold an alumni homecoming today at SJA's Mother Francisca Auditorium in connection with the school's diamond jubilee celebration. Registration starts at 2 p.m. to be followed by a guided tour of the campus. Mass is at 4 p.m. with Father Robert Reyes as the main celebrant. Call SJAAAI president Esperanza Naval Prim at 281-0929.

Olsha Grand Alumni Homecoming

THE (COR Unum) Alumni Organization of Olsha Inc. is sponsoring the Olsha grand alumni homecoming today at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Academy, Guimba, Nueva Ecija. For details, call Grig Montegrande at 528-0213 or 527-3342.

FUSION PARTNERS WITH CINNABON

Fusion, the bundled services of BayanTel, Sky Internet, ZPDee and SkyCable has tied up with Canelle Foods Corp., makers of Cinnabon world-famous cinnamon rolls. Both companies have committed to mutually support their special events and promotional activities in various malls, commercial centers and residential villages. Shown are Cinnabon and BayanTel executives posing in front of the newly opened Cinnabon outlet in SM Megamall, from left, Rommel Almuete, Canelle Foods marketing officer; Jeane Pierre Etroit, Cinnabon chief operating officer; Rodrigo Montinola, BayanTel/Fusion vice president for marketing; Michael Cervantes, BayanTel assistant vice president for corporate affairs; Maritess Canlas, BayanTel/Fusion product manager and Rene Santos, president of Canelle Foods Corp.

TNT EXPRESS AWARDS GRAND PRIZE

TNT Express, the leading global provider of express, mail and logistics services, has presented to its customers the TNT 'Get-To-Know-You-Better' rewards promotion in recognition of the strong support the company has received from its clients throughout the Philippines. BASF foreign traffic manager Lester Pineda was the lucky winner of the grand prize, a trip for two to Boracay inclusive of 3-day/2-night accommodations, during the raffle draw at the TNT head office. Shown is TNT Express country manager Jose Luis Romero-Salas (second from right) congratulating winner Lester Pineda. Also present during the awarding were TNT Express country marketing and sales manager May Sinnung (right) and TNT territory manager Angelo Villanueva.

PIETROS FOUNDATION, TEATRO CANTARTE MOA

Pietros Foundation Inc. and Teatro Cantarte joined hands in the search for talents from among the less-privileged children, trained and featured them in their production of a musical adaptation of Charles Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol' dubbed as 'Ang Munting Tinig Ng Pasko.' Presentations were scheduled in several venues in Metro Manila in December. Seated second and third from left are director Johnson Li and Arch Jan R. Crisol, PFI president.

World Fish Center saving marine resources

BY MOZART PASTRANO
Contributor

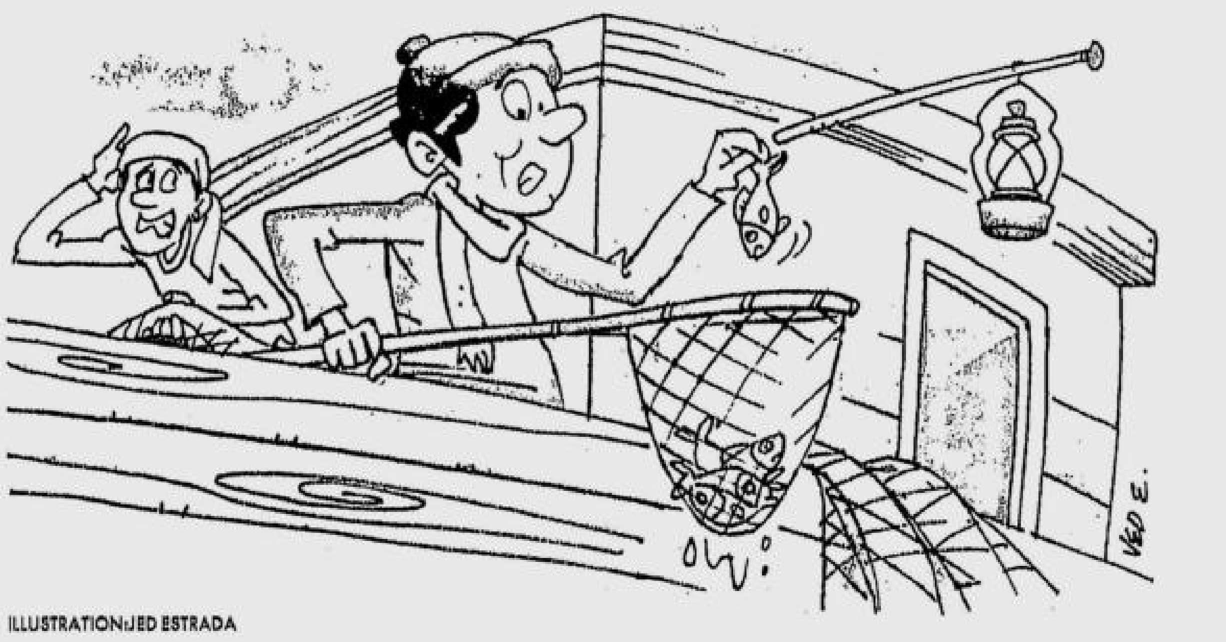


ILLUSTRATION:JED ESTRADA

PENANG ISLAND, Malaysia—The Philippines is losing at least US$125 million every year from its fisheries industry due to the worsening state of the country's coral reefs—and that's a conservative estimate.

This was one of the alarming findings of a three-year study on Asia's fishing industry and coastal resources management conducted by the World Fish Center, an independent, multidisciplinary scientific research institute focusing on food security and poverty eradication in developing countries through sustainable aquatic resources management.

Titled "Sustainable Management of Coastal Fish Stocks in Asia," the recently released study said fish stock in the Philippines today is only 10 percent of that in the 1940s. Fish stock biomass in Manila Bay, for instance, is only 840 tons today, while in 1949 it was 8,240. San Miguel Bay in Bicol now yields only 1,107 tons of fish stock biomass, compared to 8,900 tons in 1947.

"Today fish stocks are down to as low as 10 percent of the original unfished levels in the Philippines, as in most countries in the Ascan region," said Len Garces, a Filipino scientist who helped conceptualize, implement and analyze the research.

The study showed that an hour's effort of fishing, say, in the Gulf of Thailand now yields only 15.82 kg of fish, compared to 140.72 kg in 1966.

Fewer 'valuable' fish

But these frightening figures are only half the story.

The data from over 20,600 trawl hauls across Southeast Asia, also recorded the dismal state of fish biodiversity.

"Our assessments have also shown that the relative abundance of the more valuable fishes—such as groupers, snappers, sharks and rays—has decreased sharply. Today's catch consists mainly of smaller, less valuable species—such as cardinal and trigger fishes—and even of species lower in the food chain, like squids," disclosed Garces.

Studies on Lingayen Gulf showed that while there was an abundance of the prized lapu-lapu in the late 1940s, it no longer appeared in fishermen's catch from the area by the late 1980s.

Earlier studies by the Center showed that 58 percent of the world's coral reefs have fallen victim to human abuse. In fact, the study pointed out that 80 percent of Southeast Asia's reefs are at the "highest risk" of extinction.

According to the World Fish Center, fish provide animal protein to one billion people on earth and livelihood to 150 million people. But the Center warned that the sustainable limits of the capture fisheries industry—as opposed to fish farming—has already been reached at 89 million metric tons per year.

"Out of 200 fish stocks in the world, more than 25 percent were overexploited, depleted, or recovering and will produce greater catches only if returned to a healthier state. Thirty-eight percent were fully exploited and could not produce more catch without depleting the base stock. Only a little more than 33 percent could produce more," Dr. Meryl J. Williams, the Center's director general, quoted a Food and Agriculture Organization study.

Fish wars

Williams noted the complexity of the problem: "Interests such as tourism, conservation, aquaculture and farming clash over rights to fish and to use the environments fish inhabit. As resources become scarcer, land use conflicts between different stakeholder groups can become serious issues."

All these, she said, had led to the growing global phenomenon of "fish wars."

In the 1970s Britain and Iceland fought what became known as the "cod wars." In the 1990s Spanish fishers attacked British and French vessels over tuna, even as French fishers violently protested the low fish prices set by the European Union. Over the years Australia, New Zealand and Japan, among several countries, have been squabbling over migratory fish stocks such as the southern bluefin tuna.

Fishers in the Pacific are familiar with turf wars over the orange roughy, the southern shark, and the Patagonian toothfish. Even the Abu Sayyaf gunmen in Jolo were decrying the poaching by trawlers on their traditional inshore fishing territory and were demanding that the Philippine government give them back their fishing rights.

"Although many of us are probably more aware of wars fought over religious freedom, political ideologies and social issues, conflicts over fishing rights and resources are just as common, if less reported," said Dr. Williams.

RP's loss, Malaysia's gain

What can be done in the face of such harrowing reality?

The World Fish Center, formerly called the International Center for Living Aquatic Resources Management (Iclarm), has been actively searching for solutions for the past 24 years.

Founded by the Rockefeller Foundation as a special project at the University of Hawaii, the Center was registered as an autonomous, nonprofit, international scientific research institution in 1977 in the Philippines, where its Makati office served as global headquarters.

But political power play in the Estrada administration forced the Center to move to Malaysia two years ago. It opened its headquarters in this picturesque tourism island recently, and gave the INQUIRER a look-see.

The 5.7-hectare site donated by the Malaysian government, looks like a ritzy resort in the tropics. Five main buildings in shimmering white are sprawled from a scenic central base—a fishpond where some experimental fish swim gleefully. The Center's headquarters was built at a cost of US$3.8 million.

It employs over 260 staff worldwide and manages projects in more than 60 countries. It runs research facilities and offices in Bangladesh, Cameroon, the Caribbean, Egypt, Malawi, New Caledonia, the Solomon Islands, Vietnam, and the Philippines (in Los Baños).

The Center's work

Together with its over 300 partner organizations worldwide, the Center has come up with improved breeds of tropical food fish like the Nile tilapia, developed methods to manage complex tropical fisheries and reefs and applied technologies that integrate aquaculture into existing agriculture systems. It has also developed high-value coral reef species and looked for new practices for the sustainable management of small-scale fisheries.

The Center has also developed global databases, including one on the world's fishes and another on coral reefs.

"Fisheries science needs to include the whole system of fisheries politics and management, not just the biological resource, the fleet and market economics," Dr. Williams said. "Research must span disciplines and scientists must adopt key roles."

Dr. Williams, a key figure in the fisheries sector in Australia, is the only female heading an institution in the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). The latter is a consortium of 58 governments, private foundations, and international and regional organizations working to mobilize science for world peace, prosperity, health and environment sustainability.

"My concern," she said, "has been how to use research to change people's lives for the better—to find applications in the real world for scientific research, to address resource management in our complex world today."

(This article was written under the auspices of the Nippon Foundation Fellowships for Asian Public Intellectuals.)

Students seek help

EUREKA!

Queena N. Lee-Chua

A GOOD part of my letters come from students, almost all of whom invariably have math or science phobia, or who have assignments they want help in. A representative letter comes from Lorraine Lao [lorraine_l@lycos.com]:

I went to Bookmark in Shangri-La and saw your book "Eureka." I was with my classmate and she bought one. I just photocopied hers to save money. Anyway, it's pretty good and I learned a lot in math. Can I just tell you that I flunked, well, almost in math, during our second quarter. My mom was so disappointed. I went to National and saw your book "Why Be Afraid of Math." Just looking at the title, I felt like I can do it, and there isn't really any reason to be afraid of math. In the third quarter, I got the highest score in our exam in math! I guess the words "quiz" and "test" are making me even more nervous. I wasn't able to buy the book because I didn't have money at that time, but I just told my mom to buy me one when I get to school in June. I will be a sophomore. Can you give me pointers on some of the lessons we will be taking up in second year? Thanks.

Congratulations on your third quarter performance. I hope you now see that with some confidence, you can make sense of math. As for tips on test anxiety, since you have a Xerox copy of "Eureka," why don't you read again the article on "How to Take a Math Exam"? Follow those pointers—really follow them, not just read them—and you should be able to do well. As for sophomore math, it still mainly revolves around algebra. I suggest you master your freshman math topics first before thinking about the next year.

By the way, compared to other books, mine are not expensive. "Eureka" costs P175 (about the price of three hamburgers) and "Why Be Afraid" costs only P95. I am not sure how much money you can save by photo-copying them instead of getting a personal copy of your own. Anyway, I am glad you found them helpful. Good luck!

Another comes from Mary Fatima G. Davila (mfag_davila@yahoo.com):

I am fond of reading INQUIRER because it has balanced news and fearless views. I have read some of your past articles, and I have found out that you could help people who have problems, requests on math and other things.

This upcoming school year I will be a junior high school student. Some say that third year math is the hardest one of all. I am just average in math, so my mother enrolled me in a tutoring class to help me. I found out that "radicals" is one of the brain-twisters of third year math. Can you give me some examples and websites on this topic because our book has so little information on this? Also, is geometry for third year? I am just wondering why our book author includes so much algebra (chapters 1 to 6) and geometry appears only in Chapters 7 to 10. Isn't geometry what we have to take?

Many students find geometry difficult because it is the first time they encounter proofs (which require brainwork, not just memorization or the routine procedures of algebra). For the first time, they are forced to think really hard, and many of them give up and say they hate math. However, remember that geometry has been around since the time of Euclid (whom you will meet soon), and that it has proven indispensable throughout history and in our daily lives now. Why should you be scared of something which is so practical (and believe me, once you understand it) beautiful?

That said, I am a bit puzzled about your request on radicals. "Radicals" is a first-year high school topic, but I think with the advent of the integrated math curriculum (which I am not in favor of), radicals may still be introduced in third year. There is nothing really difficult about radicals (in fact, many of its operations are basically routine). Any math website (just key in "radicals" in any search engine) should have lots of exercises. Any high school math textbook should also have exercises on these (I cannot recommend any locally made ones, since they are virtual imitations of foreign ones. Be sure to buy a textbook with answers at the back so you can monitor your progress.) Also, since you are enrolled in a tutorial class, why don't you ask your tutor for additional exercises? You are paying them—they should provide materials for you. (If not, change tutors.)

The adoption of integrated math (the so-called SEDP curriculum) by the DECS is also the reason third year high school math still includes a huge chunk of algebra. I have spoken to several DECS officials through the years, through several administrations, about this issue, but of course, change (especially in the bureaucracy) takes time. If integrated math can be taught well (by highly competent and trained teachers, which is a rarity in our country), then well and good. But making students go through an assortment of topics does not lead to mastery of any topic (jack of all trades but master of none). I can go on and on about the ill effects of a pseudo-integrated curriculum, but that is fodder for another column.

Below is a request from Fatima Acuna [f_acua@yahoo.com] of Ateneo de Davao University.

I am a psychology student and an avid reader of your column. I am one of the writers of our social science division newsmagazine called "Social Signs." I read your article titled Biology and Other Science Snafus (March, 2001) and I found it very amusing. I would like to feature it in our news mag, considering not all students have access to the PDI and not all have the luxury of time of reading your column due to school constraints. I am now asking for permission to feature it in our news mag, and I hope for your utmost consideration.

For a school newsmagazine where the target audience is students and teachers, I do not see any problem in reprinting my article. Of course, you have to cite the original source (Eureka! column, Science and Health Page, PDI, date of publication). I congratulate you on being a fellow writer, and I hope more of your classmates would become interested in the social and natural sciences. However, I don't think the constraints of school are a valid excuse not to read the papers. Good luck.

The case of Karen's 'lolo'

BY RAFAEL R. CASTILLO, MD

MEDICAL FILES

ILLUSTRATION:JED ESTRADA

A LOT of people are moved by that touching fast-food commercial about a grandfather who cannot recall her granddaughter's first name. The commercial depicts a supposed to be blissful meal that suddenly turns sour after the grandfather repeatedly calls his granddaughter, Karen, by the name Gina.

"*San ka ba galing Gina, kasi ang tagal mong nawala Gina,*" uttered the grandfather to Karen.

In the commercial, the grandfather seems bewildered as soon as Karen approaches him. Evidently, the grandfather is convinced that he has not seen his granddaughter for quite a long time when in fact, the granddaughter has just left to order their meal at the counter.

Memory lapses

Karen apparently feels upset by her *lolo*'s memory lapse. Many would think that such memory lapses are part of the aging process. In the case of Karen's *lolo*, it may be a progressive irreversible memory loss known as Alzheimer's disease.

Alzheimer's disease (AD), also known as Alzheimer's dementia, results in a progressive and irreversible loss of higher brain functions. It is brought about by the degeneration of brain tissue and it is currently the most common form of dementia that occurs in the elderly. Approximately five to 10 percent of the population over the age of 65 shows some signs of AD. However, the disease is not restricted solely to the elderly. Some patients with early onset hereditary Alzheimer's disease—approximately 10 percent of all AD sufferers—may have symptoms in their early 50s.

Symptoms of AD include problems remembering recent events, difficulty performing familiar tasks and learning new skills. Confusion occurs as to the time of day or date, and patients often believe they are living in the past. For some patients, there may be changes in personality and behavior, impaired judgment, difficulty finding words, pursuing thoughts and ideas, and following directions.

Age-related

Because AD is age-related, anyone above 60 years of age can develop the disease. But it is good to point out that the disease is not a normal part of the aging process. To date, the precise cause of AD is still unknown. Various theories have been implicated, such as an insidious virus infection, an autoimmune reaction or a biochemical imbalance in the brain.

Environmental risk factors may play a major role in the development of AD. Evidences have shown that head trauma and aluminum toxicity could be contributory factors for the development of the disease. Genetic factor is also one of the considerations being investigated. Worldwide, approximately 10 percent of all cases of AD are inherited. Some researches suggest that it may be caused by mutations in the amyloid protein precursor or APP gene, and in genes known as presenilins.

So far, the most remarkable discovery has something to do with the abnormal deposits of amyloid protein, which was found in the brains of AD patients. Amyloid is not normally found in the brain and it has been found to come from a larger precursor protein known as APP.

Studies have shown that amyloid is neurotoxic because it poisons brain cells, the primordial reason the brain deteriorates. It has also been found that amyloid interferes with normal brain functioning, especially with the release of a chemical called acetyl choline or Ach. Ach is one of the neurotransmitters used by the brain to transmit messages between brain cells. When amyloid prevents the production of a transmitter, it cuts all the connections between the brain cells and all body parts necessary for proper functioning. That is why the focus of major researches regarding AD is to find ways to increase the level of Ach in the brain.

Amyloid deposits are especially found in two specific areas of the brain: in the "temporal lobe" and the "frontal lobe." The temporal lobe is involved in storing memory and damage to this part causes the memory loss of an AD patient. On the other hand, the frontal lobe determines the personality of an individual and any damage to it can result in an abrupt personality change.

More forgetful

As the disease progresses, patients become gradually more forgetful. Their memory and ability to take in new information continue to deteriorate. This leads to common lapses, such as opening the faucet and forgetting to turn it off. A patient may also forget what he was saying in the middle of a conversation, confuse the meaning of words, have trouble making plans or decisions, become much slower in speaking and understanding, and have difficulties with personal hygiene. At this point, the patient needs supervision.

Adjustments to new places or new social situations may prove very stressful. Controlling emotions also becomes harder. Other problems include changes in personality such as becoming paranoid, obsessive-compulsive or even violent. The patient may even wander and become lost.

At the final stage of AD, sufferers become apathetic. They fail to recognize people or even their own reflection, and they can no longer control their bladder and bowel functions. They seem unable to make any sense of the world or to manage even simple tasks such as dressing or washing.

Later stages of the disease include severe difficulty with speech, incontinence and difficulty in walking. AD patients will eventually be unable to talk, sit up, smile and hold up their head. This functional progression of AD is known as retrogenesis or the reversal of a child's acquisition of mental and physical abilities in the first stage of human development.

By this stage, the outcome of AD is fatal. Because AD patients are elderly, many of them have other diseases and may die from the common causes of terminal illness like heart disease, cancer and respiratory disorders. A patient may live for up to 20 years but survival time is usually around eight to 10 years.

Those who do not succumb to an incidental death tend to die of serious infections. In the last days, an AD patient may have problems in eating, drinking and swallowing food that result in aspiration pneumonia. Strangely, many people with AD may remain fit and may die in accidents due to the patient's diminished agility combined with impaired judgment of risk.

Treatment

Currently, there is no effective treatment for AD. There is still much to learn about the disease although it has been identified and studied for almost a hundred years now. Research has suggested many possibilities, but none of these have so far proven to cause significant improvement in the majority of Alzheimer's sufferers. To date, cholinesterase inhibitors have been approved for treatment. These drugs inhibit the breakdown of acetyl choline to help preserve brain function.

Other available drug treatment is purely for symptomatic relief like neuroleptics, antidepressants and benzodiazepines. A hallucinating patient will benefit from low doses of neuroleptics. A patient with significantly depressed mood, on the other hand, may improve with antidepressants. However, these medications have to be used strictly under a doctor's supervision because they have serious side effects.

It is good to note that the most important treatment for an AD patient is psychosocial therapy. This includes communication therapy and familial support with the patient's day to day tasks. An AD patient may seem to be functioning normally one day but everything changes abruptly the next day so family members need to learn how to read the patient's action.

Biggest challenge in life

Family members must learn how to deal with all the hang-ups of an AD patient It is undoubtedly annoying when an AD patient hides everything or when he turns off the spin dryer even if you are not yet finished with the laundry. These manifestations are normally part of the disease and the best way to deal with them is with unwavering patience and tolerance.

Because an AD patient has lost the ability to perform even the simplest of household tasks, it is very important to praise every work that he undertakes. He might break a plate or two while washing the dishes but still, try to thank him for a job "well done." A compliment serves dual purpose because it makes both the patient and the person complimenting feel better.

Most of the times, an AD patient tells nonsensical stories or becomes increasingly upset with hallucinations. The patient may believe that he just had a frightening conversation with a friend who died decades ago. The only way to temporarily stop his behavior is to distract him by asking questions about pleasant things such as his teenage years, the pastor's sermon last Sunday or the neighborhood's newest family.

Be aware of all the patient's physical needs. An AD patient has a very difficult time articulating his needs. For one, wandering is a symptom of a physical need. Try to learn the signals that the patient makes when he needs to use the restroom, when he is hungry, thirsty, or bored.

Living with a patient with Alzheimer's disease can be one's biggest challenge in life. No doubt, it will require understanding, compassion and tolerance. But with a big dose of these, both the patient and his loved ones, can still have wonderful moments together, including sharing a snack of burger and fries.

(The stories in Medical files are based on the case histories of actual patients. Some information have been changed to hide the patient's identity. For comments or inquiries, e-mail raffymd@i-manila.com.)

SCIENCE /HEALTH

CESAR . MANGAWANG, Editor ■ STELLA O. GONZALES, Assistant Editor

Top stories of the year

BY CHARLES E. BUBAN

WHEN future historians of health and science consider this year, what will they say were its most notable breakthroughs and discoveries? While we can't speak for them, we do know that they'll have plenty of subjects to choose from.

This year, the human genome sequence was finally published, ushering a new era in medical science and ultimately paving the way to understanding the inner workings of the human body. Scientists also announced this year that they have created human embryos through cloning. They claimed however, the experiment was aimed not at creating a human being but at mining the embryo for stem cells used to treat disease. Completing this year's medical breakthroughs, engineers at Abiomed presented a completely self-contained artificial heart made up of titanium, plastic and epoxy. Five patients are now fitted with this device while 10 more await to receive Abiocor.

This year we also witness our own ingenuity with the birth of a new machine that would one day change the landscape of every city sidewalk. The Segway is truly a unique invention since it uses no brakes, no engine, no throttle, no gearshift and no steering wheel. Through our engineering prowess, we have also sent probes outside our planet to find out what's really out there. Thanks to the images that Mars Global Surveyor is still sending in, we are learning more about our neighboring planet Mars and to find out if there is really life in that mysterious red planet.

Wheels reinvented

This year's most awaited invention from Dean Kamen didn't go off as expected. The public was expecting a hydrogen-powered hovercraft or an antigravity device. But there is no denying that the Segway human transporter, initially known by its codename "Ginger," is an engineering marvel. This two-wheeled scooter-like vehicle may one day move us from place to place and from the looks of it, Segway may even threaten our cheapest pastime—walking.

The Segway operates on a complex bundle of hardware and very sophisticated software that mimics the human body's ability to maintain balance. It uses the latest advances in gyroscope, has 10 microprocessors, an accelerometer, and a bevy of sensors. It "reads" your subtle movements and from that, the Segway moves forward, backward, make a turn or even stop.

ILLUSTRATION:JED ESTRADA

Unlike cars, it doesn't emit noxious fumes since it runs on two rechargeable batteries and you don't need driving lessons to operate the machine. But the inventor insisted that his Segway doesn't compete with the automobile industry, but in fact, complements it. "Any place people walk, you could use this," he said of Segway which can run at about 19 to 27 km/h. The machine has a range of about 27 km and can be fully recharged overnight using an electrical outlet.

YEARENDER

Preparing the way for a Mars landing

When the Mars Global Surveyor completed its primary mission last Jan. 31, the spacecraft became the first successful mission to the red planet in two decades. In 1999, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (Nasa) lost an orbiter, a lander, and two microprobes. Of the 30 Mars missions launched by the United States and the former Soviet Union, only nine went well and of the 12 landings, only four have successfully made the mission.

Nevertheless, the Mars Global Surveyor had made up for the past failures with its astonishing images of Mars' geography, quite different from what the Viking mission saw in the '70s: mountains of ice and dustreaching as high as 1.7 miles in the north pole, dust devils constantly scratching the surfaces of impact basin Argyle Planitia and signs of buried channels that could have been carved by floods of water flowing from the southern highlands into the northern lowlands billion of years ago. There are also images suggesting water might still be flowing in the red planet.

Launched in Nov. 7, 1996 and entered the red planet's orbit on Sept. 12, 1997, the Mars Global Surveyor is now on its extended mission. Among key science findings so far, Global Surveyor has taken pictures of gullies and debris flow features that suggest there may be current sources of liquid water at or near the surface of the plane and a first 3-D view of Mars' north polar ice cap.

This year, another orbiter was launched to make global observations of Mars, including the search for water and evidence of life-sustaining environments. The Mars Odyssey reached the planet last Oct. 24, 2001 and still in the process of fixing its orbit around the planet. Notwithstanding, the Mars Odyssey has already uncovered preliminary yet tantalizing evidence for water near the surface of Mars and away from the permanently frozen north polar ice cap.

Scientists already know there is water ice in the polar cap. But water ice near the surface in warmer regions of the planet would be a remarkable and long-sought finding that would have broad implications in the search for extraterrestrial life and for the possibility of human exploration of Mars.

Wonder drugs no more?

When the recall of the cholesterol-lowering drug Baycol made headlines this year, a lot of people panicked and began to doubt this so-called wonder drug. Baycol belongs to a group of drugs called statins, most widely prescribed class of drugs for lowering cholesterol. They have been shown to reduce heart attacks and strokes, lower "bad" cholesterol more effectively than other classes of drugs, lower triglycerides while raising "good" cholesterol level. Some studies even alleged that statins even show promise in treating type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis and even certain types of cancers, which is why they are being considered wonder drugs.

That optimism soon turned to panic as news of several patients dying from a rare muscle-wasting condition called rhabdomyolysis, presumably from taking Baycol. They were worried about the safety not only of Baycol itself, but also of the other five drugs in its class still on the market—Lipitor, Lescol, Mevacor, Pravachol and Zocor. Doctors were quick to defend statins saying such fatal reaction to a statin is quite rare—1 in 1 million—and that statins shouldn't be pulled off the market right away.

Although researchers are quick to point out that tests on statins are not yet conclusive and that doctors are still learning about its side effects, statins still give hope to patients with various ailments and who would have relied on two or more medications if not for this wonder drug.

More power for your car

The 12-volt battery, which has been a fixture inside the world's automobiles for almost 45-years, may soon find itself worn out with the introduction of a new 45-volt battery. This new generation battery may look like an ordinary car battery, but it packs three times the power. With more volts you have, more power to charge up your cellphone, run your VCDs, feed your massive stereo systems, and run your other electronic gadgetry inside the car.

The new 42-volt battery and a combined alternator starter that comes with it will enable a fuel-friendly feature called "stop-start," which shuts down the engine when not running. The battery also helps in economizing fuel by removing the drain of belt-driven systems like power steering, which will be fueled by electricity instead of motor power.

Bugs that won't just die

While the anthrax is making headlines in the United States, it is a fact that the organism has killed only five people so far. Halfway around the globe another incurable bug is silently wrecking havoc in the African continent. Ebola, one of the most deadly viral diseases known to humankind, has already claimed the lives of 13 individuals in Gabon while killing five more in the neighboring country of the Republic of Congo.

The World Health Organization reports that over 800 people have died of the disease since the virus was first identified in 1976 in western Sudan and in a nearby region of Congo. The disease last struck in Uganda, killing 224 people last year.

While researchers do not know what causes Ebola, the virus is believed to be carried by some animals and insects. There is no cure, and death occurs in 50 to 90 percent of those who contract it. The virus is passed through contact with bodily fluids, but is not airborne.

Nuclear science seen to help fight poverty

BY TESSA R. SALAZAR

NEW variety of plants created. Harmful insects exterminated. Radiation creating the next generation semiconductor devices. Nuclear science and technology may seem like a passive industry in our country today. But scientists here are encouraged to nurture their creativity to make nuclear energy work for social development.

The Philippine Nuclear Science Institute is expected to provide solutions to the problems of poverty by producing improved varieties of plants developed through mutation breeding.

Science and Technology Secretary Estrella Alabastro, during the 2001 Atomic Energy Week Celebration, asked the PNRI to make a "paradigm shift" so that nuclear science and technology can help alleviate poverty. She cited how the PNRI could make technology transfers, particularly in Mindanao. Alabastro announced in a Dec. 10 speech that the DoST is pursuing its comprehensive S&T program for Mindanao.

These technology transfers include the use of isotope techniques in determining the beneficial effect of interplanting fast-growing nitrogen-fixing trees used as hedgerows in upland/rainfed areas. Alabastro said that the method is being exploited to meet the demands for more food and fuel.

Alabastro also cited the introduction of what she described as "a fast-growing nitrogen-fixing tree," which is becoming popular because hillsides are usually more fertile than lowland areas. Studies are also aimed at understanding the erosion process in upland agricultural areas using Cs-137 measurements.

Another program useful in the Mindanao area would be the identification of groundwater systems in Davao City using nuclear isotope hydrology techniques.

Irradiated mangoes

"A very exciting prospect for food irradiation (technology) is the recent result of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's working visit to the United States, where she was able to get the approval of entry of Philippine mangoes to the United States," said Alabastro.

The use of irradiation as a phytosanitary treatment for quarantined mangoes could be key to maintaining this deal. Irradiation would also extend the shelf life of mangoes.

It was also announced during the Atomic energy week that Guimaras Province, one of the least developed provinces in the Philippines is now the site of a sterile insect technique project of the DoST and the Department of Agriculture.

The Guimaras Island project would render the island fruit-fly free so that the mangoes produced in the province would pass export requirements on mangoes.

Tetsuya Endo, vice chair of the Japan Atomic Energy Commission, lauded the Philippines for starting to embark on nuclear technology to fight poverty, and cited the new varieties of plants through radiation-induced mutation breeding.

New rice variety

Japan, he added, has had its own share of similar projects. He cited a new variety of rice with short stalks resistant to wind damage, and the creation of a new kind of pear that is more resistant to disease. Endo also added that crops that resist disease also require fewer chemicals.

"Healthier varieties mean fewer crop failures and higher yields," he added.

Japan, not so long ago, eliminated the melon fly in Okinawa using the sterile insect technique, said Endo. Flies were radiated with cobalt 60, making them unable to reproduce. These sterile flies were reintroduced into the natural population and allowed to mate, but produced no offspring. Endo said they used no pesticides. As a result, he said the people of Okinawa are now able to ship their fruits and vegetables uncontaminated to Honshu, the main island of Japan.

Radiation also made possible the creation of advanced new materials—the next generation semiconductor devices and ceramic compounds. Endo also related how it was applied to remove harmful substances from flue gases and industrial wastewater. Radiation also facilitated the manufacturing of biodegradable polymers.

Other headliners in 2001

MASSIE K. SANTOS
Contributor

The human genome project: promises to keep

WHEN Celera Genomics and the public consortium jointly announced in February that the entire human genome sequence had been mapped, scientists predicted that treating diseases would never again be the same. By knowing the human genome, drug therapies could be made specifically for a single patient and have little or no side effects. Indeed that promise has already been partially fulfilled.

Humans learned they only had about 30,000-40,000 genes in them, which is only twice as many as are found in simpler organisms such as the fruit fly. At least 40 percent of the genes in the sequence seem to have no particular function, although some scientists believe that the complexity of the human system may be due to these genes. It was also determined that humans are 99 percent identical to each other, and that bananas shared half of their genes with humans. Unfortunately, because so many scientists from all over the world worked on portions of the entire sequence, the draft published in February remains essentially the same today. Think of it as a thousand piece puzzle: all the pieces look the same so it takes a while to figure out which piece goes where.

Mir splash down

When the Russians sent Mir into orbit on Feb. 20, 1986, they only expected to use it for five years. Fifteen years, 86,000 orbits around the earth, 15 countries, 100 people, and 17,000 experiments later, the space station's 135 tons of metal fell in the Pacific Ocean. Named for the Russian word for both "peace" and "world," Mir's reentry on March 23 marked the end of the Russian space program and the space race.

Mir will always be remembered for surviving in the face of catastrophe. A collision with a cargo ship, computer failures, oxygen leaks and even fire aboard the station failed to force the Russians to give in to fears that the station would simply shut down and fall from the sky onto innocent civilians.

AIDS today: not better, far worse?

In 1981, news stories covered a mysterious illness that was killing homosexual males. Twenty years later, nearly everyone on the planet knows that AIDS knows no barriers of class, color, religion or gender, and that there still isn't a cure for this disease.

When the first protease inhibitor drugs were approved in 1995, people believed the cocktails composed of various drug combinations were the long-awaited cure for AIDS. The numbers of HIV-infected people had started decreasing and people took the idea of safer sex to heart. Today the world is still no closer to a cure than it was six years ago, and HIV infected populations are once again on the rise because people became too complacent. The 36 million AIDS sufferers, with alarmingly large numbers of them in Africa, India and China, may have longer life spans today but the medications they need to function on some level of normalcy are often too expensive for many to even obtain.

Scientists are feverishly trying to find an AIDS vaccine while also trying to prevent the number of drug-resistant AIDS strains from rising even higher. Billions of dollars have been spent on HIV drugs but only millions have been given to groups working on stopping AIDS completely. Research groups hope to have eight to 12 AIDS vaccines in development by 2007, with at least two being used for clinical trials involving humans.

For cancer cells only: Gleevec and other targeted drugs

Most drugs take decades to go from development at a lab to mass production for use. But Gleevec, a chemotherapy drug from Novartis Pharmaceuticals, was approved by the US Food and Drug Administration in just 13 years. As the first of the targeted cancer treatments, Gleevec works by eliminating only cancer cells without doing severe damage to nearby healthy cells, which is why so many people find it exciting. Currently used to treat chronic myeloid leukemia (CML), or a cancer of white blood cells, clinical trials showed that 90 percent of human patients responded unbelievably well to the therapy, with cancer cells disappearing completely after only five months in some cases, and normal blood counts being restored in most.

Gleevec and other drugs of its kind (signal transduction inhibitors) work by blocking certain cancer-causing molecules, in this case abnormal versions of proteins found in nearly all CML patients, eventually killing only the cancer cell itself. Gleevec has also been found to be effective on two other types of cancer, though unfortunately, it has no effect on the more common types of cancers such as those of the breast, prostate and lung. Still, Gleevec's existence brings hope that similar cancer-specific treatments will be available sooner than was thought.

Curtailing the common cold?

There are over 200 different viruses that may strike when someone gets a cold, and building an immunity against one isn't proof that one isn't susceptible to the other 199 types. This is why there are drug treatments for nearly every type of disease imaginable but none for colds. While chicken soup, vitamin C, liquids and bed rest remain popular methods for getting rid of a cold quickly, a new drug may soon top the list.

Pleconaril is a drug that's recently been proven to stop colds a day earlier than usual. It targets picornaviruses, including the rhinovirus, which is responsible for at least half of all colds. That pleconaril only works on half the cold viruses rather than all, and only makes the cold leave one day faster, doesn't sound like much of a big deal. But, again, this drug targets the cold virus itself, rather than simply removing the symptoms, which has never been done before.

The Abiocor artificial heart: beating inside a hero

Robert Tools underwent surgery on July 4 to have a completely self-contained artificial heart made of titanium and plastic implanted in his chest. When he died on Nov. 30 from abdominal bleeding and organ failure, he had lived nearly four months longer than anyone, doctors and scientists and himself included, had expected. Tools had been able to walk around with an external battery pack that powered his heart for up to four hours at a time, eat normal foods, and talk to his family. Five other heart patients with similar life expectancies underwent the same operation this year—two have also died, one of them on the operating table.

Researchers are quick to point out that the Abiocor heart was not to blame for any of the patients' deaths, although the anticoagulants patients take to prevent any blood clots from forming around the heart can also cause bleeding.

Cloned human embryo: much ado about nothing?

In late November, the Massachusetts-based company Advanced Cell Technology (ACT) announced that it had successfully produced a cloned human embryo. This, ACT said, was the first step toward developing the process of therapeutic cloning by which patients with various genetic disorders could be treated. The media frenzy that erupted in the wake of that revelation was predictable and people rehashed arguments for and against cloning humans. But most scientists studied ACT's claim and dismissed it as meaningless.

ACT scientists took 71 eggs from seven human females, combined them with ovarian cumulus cells and nuclei from skin fibroblasts, and on Oct. 13 saw two eggs divide to form four-celled embryos, while one egg reached a six-cell stage of development.

While scientists agree that cloning is the best way to obtain enough stem cells from human patients to treat their disorders, therapeutic cloning will not become a reality for several more years. In the meantime, it cannot be denied that ACT did succeed in producing a human embryo without combining sperm and egg. Unfortunately, that's all that can be said.

Asimo and friends: one step closer to humanity?

When the first Aibo was sold in the late 1990s, it signaled the beginning of the interactive toy industry. Today Poo-Chi, Tekno, Rocket and their robo-animal friends are the hottest toys around, finding homes not just with children or teenagers but also other people who want pets but can't have any for one reason or another. The robot pets don't need to be cleaned up after, and they can walk, run, bark and respond to their owner's moods.

Asimo, Honda's 2-year-old walking robot, is now rivaled by Fujitsu's Hoap-1, which was released this year and marketed to labs interested in studying robotic movement. Both Asimo and Hoap-1 are humanoid, are no taller than three feet high and are designed to function in a normal human environment. With the ability to move like humans, it may not be long before these robots will be found in the home with Aibo and his friends. Robots are already in the hospital as janitors and doctors anyway, and the first surgery performed by robots happened earlier this year, guided by human surgeons.

Bristol-Myers Squibb exec wins TOYM award

BRISTOL-MYERS Squibb medical director Jaime C. Montoya was recently the recipient of The Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) Award for medicine in honor of his significant contributions in the field of infectious diseases. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo presented the award to Dr. Montoya on Dec. 11 at the Malacañang Palace.

Now on its 43rd year, the TOYM Award gives national recognition to young men and women whose selfless dedication to their profession or vocation has resulted in notable contributions to the welfare of their countrymen and our country at large, as well as to the advancement of their respective fields of endeavor.

Dr. Montoya finished his medical degree from the University of the Philippines College of Medicine where he is also an associate professor in infectious diseases. He holds a master's degree in Science for Clinical Tropical Medicine from the University of London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. He is currently pursuing a doctorate degree in Immunology also at the University of London.

MONTOYA

He is a founding member of the Philippine Hospital Infection Control Society and a member of the Philippine College of Physicians, Philippine Society for Microbiology and Infectious Diseases, Philippine College of Surgeons and an examiner at the Philippine Board of Surgery.

HEALTHSCOPE

Book on natural health off the press

AN INFORMATIVE book titled "Perspectives on Natural Health: An Anthology on Holistic Medicine" is now available at all National Bookstores and Power Books. The book highlights the historical development of integrated health care, Philippine medicinal plants, Iridology, Ganotherapy, holistic medicine and definition of terms in holistic medicine. Written after five years, the book includes international speeches, articles and researches by international awardee, Dr. Josef de Ubaldo, DSc. Dr. De Ubaldo received the prestigious international award, "Star of Asia Award of the Millennium," in Colombo, Sri Lanka, for his pioneering efforts in promoting and advocating natural health congresses and conferences in the Philippines.

USTH training programs open

THE UNIVERSITY of Santo Hospital Postgraduate Training office recently announced the available slots for its residency training programs in pediatrics, combined clinical and anatomic pathology, radiological sciences and family medicine. USTH's fellowship training programs in pediatric nephrology, hematology and surgery commence in January 2002. Rheumatology and Clinical Immunology Sections start in March 2002 while Gastroenterology, Pulmonary and Critical Care training programs are scheduled in June 2002. Interested parties may obtain their application forms at the USTH Clinical Division Postgraduate Training Office. For further inquiries, please call 749-9753 or 731-3001 local 2246.

Treat of the Week

Honey and Fruit Dessert

5 tbsps honey
juice of 2 lemons
dash of cinnamon
4 pcs. orange, peeled & thinly sliced crosswise
2 pcs banana, sliced 1/2" diagonally
1 cup pitted whole prunes
1 170g can NESTLÉ CREAM, chilled

Combine first 3 ingredients in a small bottle. Shake for about 2 min. Set aside. Arrange orange, banana and prunes in a platter. Pour prepared dressing over fruits; cover and chill for about 2 hours. Serve with NESTLÉ CREAM.

Watch out for next week's fruity treat!

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2001

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

C1

Saturday SPECIAL

NESTOR U. TORRE, Editor · EDMUND L. SICAM, Associate Editor

The secret life of Jackielou Blanco

By Bibsy M. Carballo

IT was like opening a door to a secret world, one we hadn't been to before, a secret world known only to certain dedicated and committed individuals, one of whom was Jackielou Blanco. This was the world of the fitness enthusiasts, the health buffs, looked upon by the rest of the populace as some sort of weirdos for making the gym their playground, and the dumbbell their bible.

Curious

When we first heard that Jackielou, erstwhile singer, and respected actress, was competing in her first fitness contest, the Slimmers' World Great Bodies tilt, we were curious. We knew Jackie as a dedicated proponent of exercise, a means by which she kept her figure slim and taut, especially after giving birth. But we had not known of the extent of her involvement. More, we were not prepared for the kind of competition we watched on finals night.

Upon the urging of singer Ivy Violan, who worked out with Jackie at Megamall and claimed she was a runaway winner, we prepared ourselves for something like a beauty pageant, about which we were most familiar. Twenty-four contestants from the various branches of Slimmers' World were up for the titles of Mr. and Ms Great Bodies 2001, a competition on its seventh year.

Formal wear

The invitation called for formal wear at the Rizal ballroom of the Makati Shangri-la Hotel, but the affair was far from formal. It was in fact wild, like watching a basketball championship with fans cheering for their favorite teams. In fact, each branch had banners, and posters, and waved pompoms of colored paper. And when the Megamall branch finally won with Toby Genato and Jackie bagging dual titles, they were ecstatic.

The contest was divided into two general portions—aerobics, where one had to display the kick, four pushups, and the jumping jack for 35 percent, and physique for another 35 percent, which one displayed by posing. The remaining 30 percent went to projection, talent, and the question-and-answer portion.

If aerobics to us laymen meant roughly dance-step exercises, it is nothing like that in fitness parlance. "This was the most difficult part of the competition," Jackie tells us. "I was not confident in this part, and if I lost, it would have been because of this category."

Form is most important, says Jackie, *kailangan pantay ang lahat*, especially *sa* jumping jack where you open and close your legs while jumping. In the men's division, we marveled at the finalists who would do pushups on one arm, twisting and displaying marvelous triceps.

Three finalists

Word quickly spread that Jackielou was a strong contender when she won five awards during the pre-judging—first runner-up in Ms Kellogg's (cereals), Ms Happy Days (tea drinks), Ms Gardenia (breads), Ms BeautiControl (the skin care and cosmetic line of Tupperware).

As expected, apart from the Great Bodies title with the P75,000 prize money, on finals night, Jackie romped away with special awards as Ms Hygeia (hygienic underwear), Ms Nivea (soaps and lotions), Ms Talent, and Best in Active Wear (Lovable sportswear).

Jackie started exercising at Slimmers' as a teenager. No weights, just simple stretching and exercises thrice a week. "I had been a fat baby. I always had a *puson*, problems with my arms and legs. I thought it would be nice to be able to wear sleeveless dresses. When I started giving birth, I went to the gym simply to lose weight," she recalls.

Trainer

After giving birth to her third and last baby Arabella, Jackie went back to the gym, and sought out her trainer Christine Yu whom she hadn't seen in quite a while—and was completely floored. "When I saw her, I was in awe. She was 'like a work of art. Sexy *pero may* cuts," she says.

Christine convinced her that she, too, could have a body like that, and for the next three years Jackielou trained until she achieved reed-thin, well-defined defined muscles on arms, legs, back, flat stomach, and abs.

For the posing portion, Jackie wore a bikini (the top from trainer Christine, and her own bottom, which had to be changed thrice to fit her body, which had become increasingly firmer as the competition neared).

"I had never worn a bikini in my life, even on the beach, even as a teenager, and I was nervous," she recalls. Strangely enough, says Jackie, she didn't feel naked. Perhaps it was the dark pro-tan coloring applied on all contestants to show up their cuts to advantage. Perhaps it was the attitude that a beautiful body had its own purpose for being and should be displayed

What sacrifices did all this entail? Not much, Jackie assures us. We knew that each morning she would drop off her kids at school, proceed to the gym, and pick up the kids on the way back. It was a schedule religiously followed, so that if we wanted to catch her, we would call before seven in the morning or at lunchtime.

No nightlife

Otherwise, Jackie claims, there was not much sacrifice involved. "I have no nightlife, I don't drink or smoke. I can eat anything—although the amounts have become less."

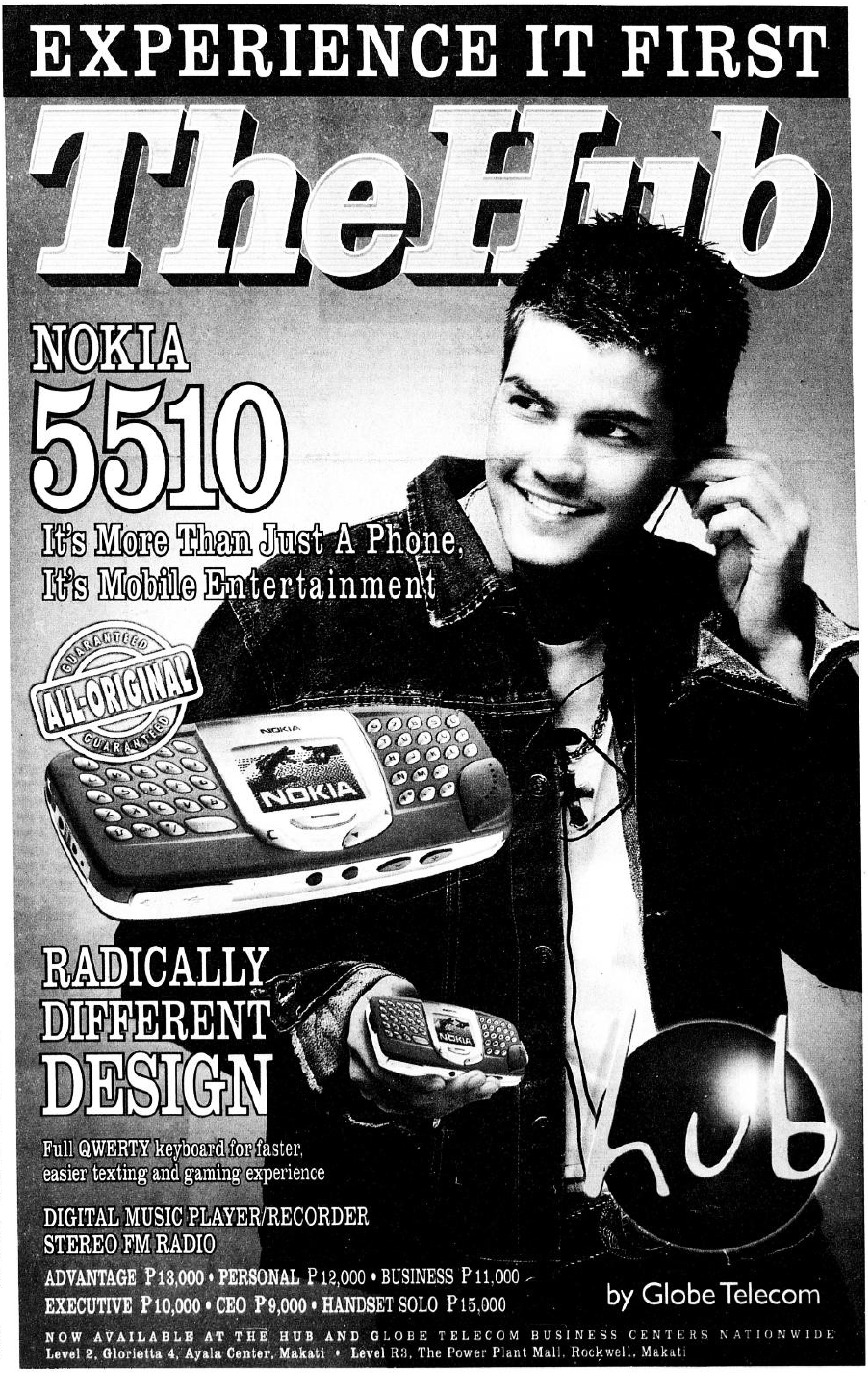
For the contest, however, she was stricter on herself. Her diet was confined to steamed fish, potatoes, salad and no salt. Three days before the competition, very little water. Supplements came simply in the form of ascorbic acid, vitamin E, and a protein drink.

Jackie was aware that because she is an actress, and better known than the rest, she had to work harder to prove that she indeed deserved the title. *"Hindi ako puedeng masilipan ng butas,"* she sighs.

THE SECRET/ P. C2

JACKIELOU (right), with fellow Great Bodies winner Toby Genato.

> We knew Jackie as a dedicated proponent of exercise, but didn't know the extent of her involvement



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Los Angeles critics vote 'In the Bedroom' best film

By Gisele Durham

LOS ANGELES—The family drama "In the Bedroom" and its lead actress Sissy Spacek received top honors Saturday from the Los Angeles Film Critics Association.

Directing debut

In Todd Field's directing debut, Spacek and Tom Wilkinson portray a grieving Maine couple whose marriage nearly collapses under the strain of their son's murder.

The awards were announced Saturday and will be presented Jan. 22.

David Lynch received directing honors for "Mulholland Drive," a dark tale of obsession, danger and amnesia in Hollywood. Lynch also was named best director at the Cannes Film Festival and the film was chosen as best 2001 movie by the New York Film Critics Circle.

WASHINGTON. Best actor award for "Training Day."

Actor Denzel Washington was named best actor for "Training Day," in which he plays a rogue cop who initiates co-star Ethan Hawke to the darker side of crime fighting.

Novelist

The supporting actor nod went to Jim Broadbent for the musical "Moulin Rouge," and "Iris," about the life of novelist Iris Murdoch whose career was cut short by Alzheimer's disease.

Kate Winslet was named best supporting actress for her role as the young Murdoch.

Other selections:

Screenplay—Christopher Nolan, "Memento."

Foreign Film—Danis Tanovic, "No Man's Land" (Bosnia).

Documentary—Agnes Varda, "The Gleaners and I."

Animation—Shrek."

Production Design—Catherine Martin, "Moulin Rouge."

Music/Score—Howard Shore, "Lord of the Rings."

Cinematography—Roger Deakins, "The Man Who Wasn't There."

Career Achievement—Ennio Morricone.

New Generation Award—John Cameron Mitchell, "Hedwig and the Angry Inch." *AP*

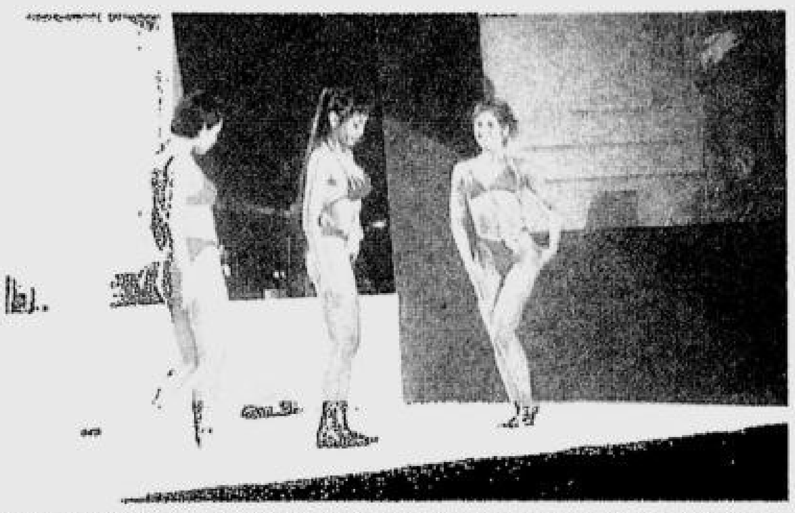
The secret life . . .

(From page C1)

What does the future now hold for Jackielou Blanco, great body? "Honestly, I still don't know," she muses. What is certain is that, now that she has the body for competition, she feels compelled to continue. Her trainer, Christine, has mounted an Iron Man, Iron Maiden competition for year 2002 which she is thinking of joining. "*Sayang naman* all that work," she explains, beaming.

"I have realized the wonders that can be done if you are committed. As an actress, it would be nice to set a trend and to inspire others."

She has also realized that age has nothing to do with achieving a great body. At 37, Jackie was up against single girls in their 20s and yet she bested them all. She has also proven that one did not lose her femininity by working out and lifting weights. Everything can be done through diet and simply working out. One did not have to take steroids which was what made one look masculine. It has also helped, she says, that there is more awareness of the virtues of physical fitness nowadays through icons like Madonna and Janet Jackson.



BLANCO (right). Age has nothing to do with achieving a great body.

Her biggest compliment, she says, however has come from the reaction of her kids. Eldest son Kenneth, 12, after the contest warned her against eating too much. "*Sayang ang katawan mo*, Mommy, he told me, and that to me was worth it all. He understood and appreciated what I was doing."

Email the author at bibsymcar@yahoo.com.

Engaging teleplay with a 'masa' touch

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

LAST Dec. 23, Channel 2's Sunday morning (11 a.m.) show, "Star Studio," came up with an engaging teleplay about how angels continue to compete for men's souls up to this day. The special Christmas episode, "Munting Liwanag," was about a young man (Bojo Molina) who split up with his girlfriend because she was pregnant and he felt he wasn't ready to become a father.

The nice twist in the episode directed by Leo Rialp was the fact that the good and bad angels who tried to influence the estranged couple for better *and* for worse were characterized as taxi drivers.

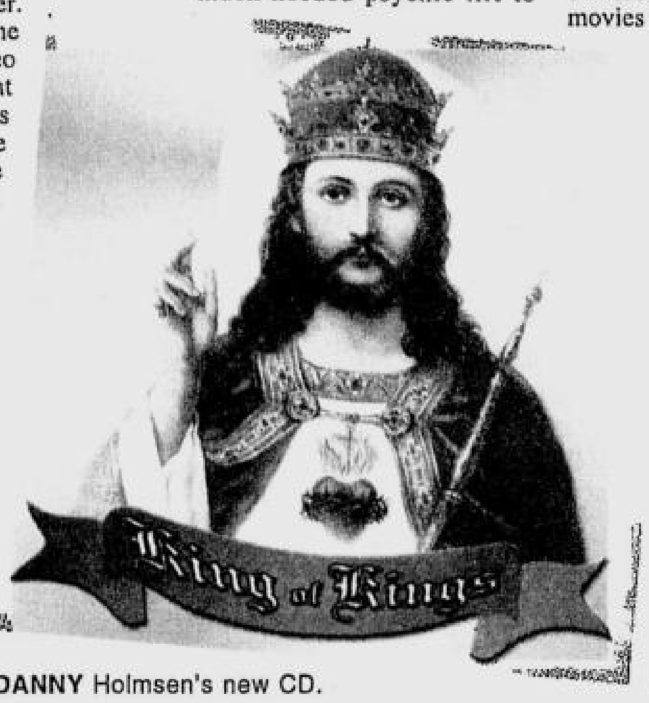
This device lent the story a "*masa*" touch, and also gave the show mobility, as the cabbies used their vehicles to transport the separated sweethearts to and away from each other.

Noni Buencamino played the "devil" cabbie with judicious comic relish, confirming our view that he isn't "*pang*-drama *lang*," and is in fact one of the most versatile young TV-film performers around.

At first, it looked like the devil was winning, because he played on Bojo's fear of responsibility. But the good angel ultimately won when he showed Bojo a "flashforward" scene two years from now, involving his girlfriend and their future son.

We enjoyed the episode but felt that it needed more complications and ups-and-downs to get viewers to really root for the good guys, who would have had to strive much harder to triumph over the wily importunings of the evil cabbie.

Still, the "Munting Liwanag" episode was pleasant enough. We hope that "Star Studio" will come up with one such "inspirational" drama per month. That would give viewers a much-needed psychic lift to counteract whatever low blows that the coming year may have in store for us.



DANNY Holmsen's new CD.

Important filmfest

Many film people are pinning their hopes on the current Metro Manila Film Festival, so we enjoin you to go out of your way to watch at least the best two or three movies showing in the filmfest.

The local movie industry has had a bad year, with only a few producers still making films and only around 15 directors still actively megging movies. Many film actors now work mainly on TV, and we hear that scores of our movie stuntmen have had to find work as taxi drivers.

Thus, the film industry is looking at the Metro filmfest as an indication of how the next movie year will fare. If the filmfest is a huge hit, producers will be heartened to make big and hopefully good movies next year. If the festival is a flop, they will continue to lie low, and everyone will be adversely affected.

So, support the Metro filmfest with your patronage. It's important, however, to support only the good productions, so that producers will be encouraged to make more quality movies next year. If you patronize deficient productions, that's what you'll get more of in 2002, and you'll have only yourself to blame.

'King of Kings'

This holiday season's spiritual dimension is boltered in a musical way by Danny Holmsen's new CD, "King of Kings." A labor of love on the part of the popular Sampaguita Pictures musical director, the CD features the vocal performances of talents like Pilita Corrales, Ric Manrique, Sylvia La Torre, Diomedes Maturan, the Mabuhay Singers, the Skylarks, Cely Bautista, Nino Javier and Jackie Cervantes.

The cuts include compositions by Holmsen like "King of Kings," "Katawan at Kaluluwa"(lyrics by Levi Celerio), "Walang Katarungan" (lyrics by Luciano B. Carlos), "The Son of God," "Diyos ay Dakila" (Danny Holmsen/ Sylvia La Torre), "You Are" (lyrics by Luciano B. Carlos), "Let God Guide Us" (Paz Yuchengco), "Mother Angelica," "Agnus Dei," "Kahapon, Ngayon at Kailan Man," "In Your Hands," "My Guardian Angel," "Happy and Gay" (Paz Yuchengco), "Dreams of Love," "My Lord and My God," and "Magandang Umaga" (lyrics by Cely Bautista).

Homsen wishes to thank Ms Azucena Vera Perez, Gregorio Vera Perez, German Moreno and P.M. Recording Studio for their help in the production of this CD. "King of Kings" is distributed by Aquarius Records and Tapes.

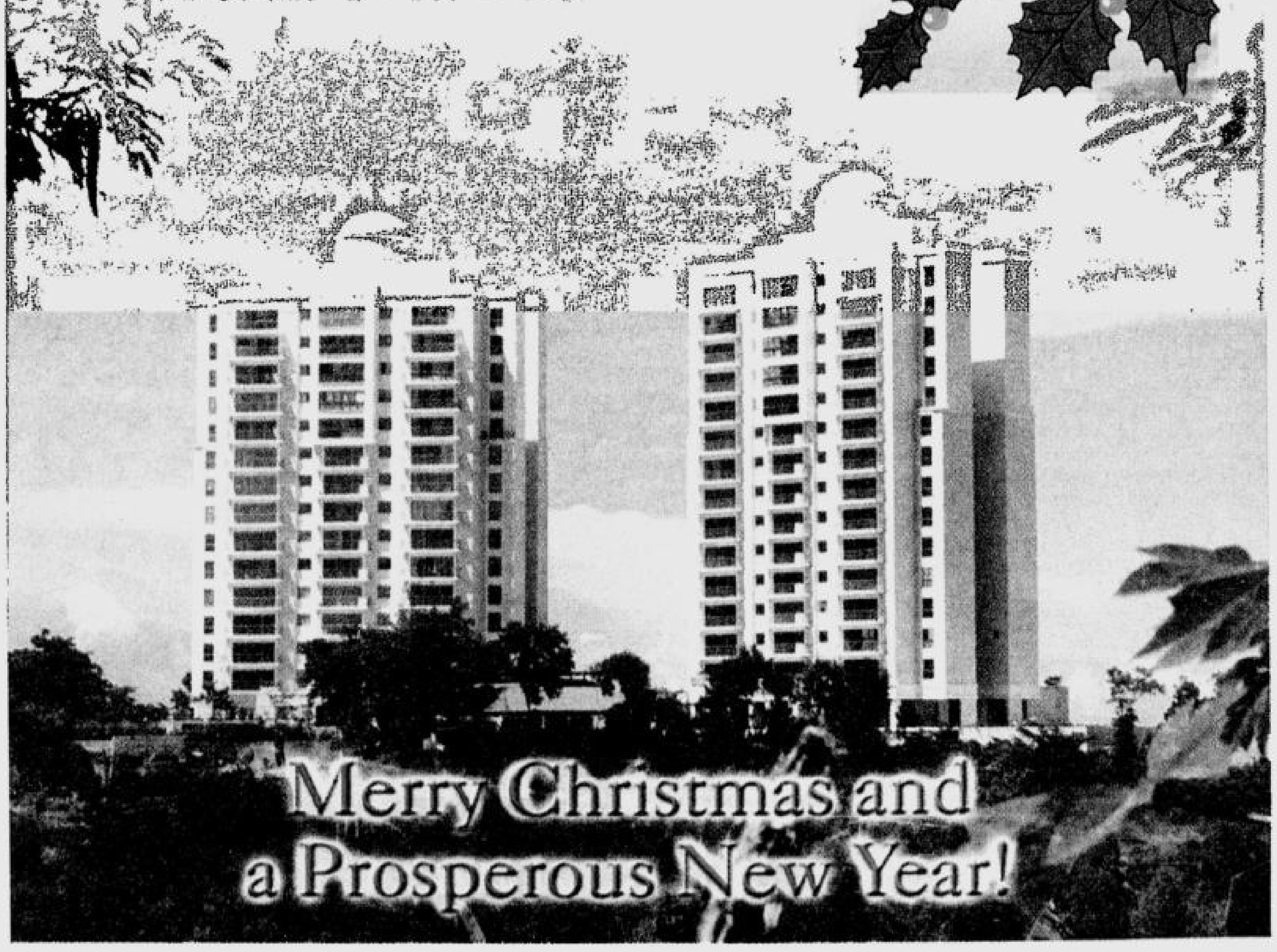
This Christmas, its time to start with a new home,
a home that is a reflection of you and your loved ones.

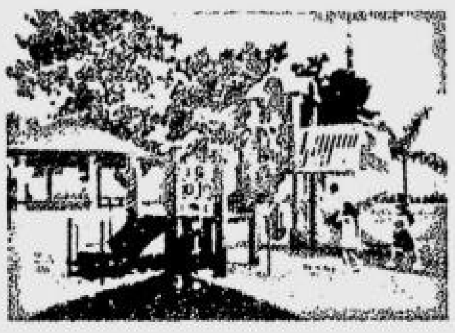
Azure skies and lush green mountains,
deep blue seas and a glimmering city beyond.

A special world of secluded luxury with sophistication,
lavish amenities in a country setting.

Rich in quality and distinct in style.

A masterpiece of your creation.
A home that says, it's you.





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BMG artists welcome Sharon to their recording family

BY JOCELYN VALLE

ON "Sharon's" Christmas episode last Sunday, some recording artists of BMG Pilipinas like Ariel Rivera, Ryan Cayabyab, Anna Fegi, Cookie Chua (of the band Color It Red), Lito Camo and the Madrigal Singers wished the singer-actress a bright future with her new recording company.

It was a joy to see labelmates act like family members especially since the recording industry has been greatly affected by rampant piracy for the last few years. "Last year was the worst," observes BMG Pilipinas' A&R executive, Vic Valenciano.

Price cut

Record companies have been forced to slash the prices of OPM cassette tapes and CDs, going as low as P170. BMG Pilipinas had decided on P270 but Sharon's album sells for P350. "*Si* Sharon Cuneta *na kasi siya, at saka may kasamang* VCD *'yung* album," he points out.

Realizing that they can't compete with the pirates in terms of pricing (because of escalating production costs on their part), Valenciano explains that BMG has chosen instead to concentrate on offering good products that cater to varied musical tastes.

Another tactic is to sign up big recording stars like Lea Salonga, who's done a few albums for BMG, and Sharon. At the same time, it continues to discover potential hitmakers, as they've done with Ariel Rivera and the two batches of Smokey Mountain.

Bigger investment

"Making albums for big-name recording stars requires a bigger investment but it also guarantees good sales," says Valenciano, adding that since Sharon's album was released on Nov. 22, it's been steadily moving up in sales and it's nearing gold-record status.

BMG Pilipinas' stable of recording artists is equally happy and excited over Sharon's entry into their family. "She's partly the reason why I'm a singer now," enthuses Ariel, who's recording a new album in January.

"While I was growing up in Canada, I didn't know much about Philippine show biz. After watching 'Dear Heart' on tape, *nagka*-crush *ako kay* Sharon. When I visited the country in 1986, I made it a point to see her. I remember *na* second episode *ng* show *niya ang napanood namin. Doon pa 'yun sa* Broadcast City."

Anna Fegi, whose debut album is titled "Anna Fegi: Every Step of the Way," likewise admits that she's a fan of the Megastar. "*'Yung* elder sister *ko ang nag*-influence *sa akin*," she recalls. "We have all of her albums and we've seen all of her movies."

Opening number

While waiting for her turn to perform (as part of the opening number, "Christmas Party" and "My Only Wish This Year"), Anna watches Sharon interview Ariel. Suddenly, it dawns on her that she is also with Sharon. "I never expected this to happen," she smiles, adding that she has sung "Bituing Walang Ningning" many times during school presentations and singing contests.

"Sharon sings from the heart," remarks Anna, awed. "*Hindi siya bumibirit pero galing sa puso ang pagkanta niya. Mapapaiyak ka talaga.* Also, she always smiles. *Kalmado siya kahit pini*-pressure *siya ng ibang tao. Hindi siya* plastic *kasi sinasabi naman niya kung galit siya. Gusto ko rin sana na ganun ako.*"

Like Anna, Cookie's singing style is completely different from Sharon's but she's also been influenced by the Megastar, who became a recording star with the release of "Mr. DJ" when she was entering adolescence.

"For a long time *kasi, puro kanta niya ang naririnig sa radyo*," says Cookie, citing "Kahit Maputi na ang Buhok Ko" as her favorite hit song by Sharon.

On the other hand, Lito Camo is not bothered by the entry of a superstar into BMG's fold. "*Magkaiba naman kami ng* style *at saka ng* market," says the man behind the "Ano Kamo" album.

Although Ryan Cayabyab is best known for his compositions, he will soon release his second album for BMG, "One More" (his third over-all, after 1981's "One" and 1991's "One Christmas").

CUNETA. Sings from the heart.

Gift

For Sharon's album, Ryan (or Mr. C, as he is fondly called) is producer of seven of the 11 cuts, and is also the writer of three songs— "All I Want" (a tune that he wrote five years ago as a gift for Sharon while she was doing an earlier album with a producer who's Ryan's close friend), "Nananabik Sa 'Yo" (written while Sharon was heavy with her second child Frankie, thus it's about a pregnant woman's excitement), and "Same Sad Song" (written by Ryan four years ago for a Taiwanese group who were fans of Smokey Mountain).

While recording the album, Mr. C encouraged Sharon to find and utilize her other voices. That's why, he explains, the listener will ask if he is really hearing Sharon sing in some tracks.

"*Hindi lang sa birit nakikita kung magaling ang isang* singer," he avers. "It's more difficult to control belting out, but if you are able to do it, the singing becomes more effective.

"Soothing music sells more," he adds. "Sharon's voice is soothing. *Hindi* limited *ang* range *niya, dati hindi lang niya ginagamit 'yung ibang* voices *niya*."

Parades, tributes highlight Walt Disney centennial

LOS ANGELES—A feast pf parades, tributes and stars recently celebrated the 100th anniversary of the birth of Walt Disney, that man whose magic touch with a white-gloved four fingered mouse launched a multi-billion-dollar worldwide entertainment industry.

In Walt Disney World in Florida, a 25-foot high "portrait" of the avuncular animator made out of cakes, a parade and a fireworks capped the theme park's "100 Years of Magic" celebrations last Dec. 5 with a special appearance by Julie Andrews of "Mary Poppins" fame.

In Beverly Hills, the inventor of the squeaky-voiced mouse called Mickey was remembered by Hollywood's finest during a tribute evening featuring rare film clips, home movies and discussions organized by the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences.

To the entertainment world, Disney, who died in 1966 aged 65, is remembered as a pioneering animator who made Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck the most famous animated characters in the world.

Time magazine film reviewer Richard Schekel, in his 1968 book "The Disney Version," called Walt "one of the most significant shaping forces in American culture in the middle third of the 20th century."

Global brand name

But to many teenagers enjoying the Magic Kingdom, Disney is merely a global brand name rather than a man who survived a tough Missouri childhood, began his artistic career drawing rabbits on the family farm, and who founded his Hollywood movie studio in a converted garage.

"When we were researching the attraction, we found that many of our guests under the age of 15 did not know Walt Disney was a real person. They thought it was a company name," said Roger Holzberg, director of the "One Man's Dream" special centennial attraction about Disney's life at Walt Disney World.

Disney, a workaholic who once said "I love Mickey Mouse more than any woman I've ever known," was already a legend when he died.

He had turned ordinary cartoons into charming animated musical features such as "Snow White," "Bambi" and "Lady and the Tramp," hosted a weekly TV show, opened Disneyland in 1955 in Anaheim, California, and was planning Disney World in Florida, which included his dream of a new city—the Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow (EPCOT).

Since his death in 1966, the Walt Disney Co. empire has added theme parks in France and Japan, a US TV network, radio stations, a hugely successful line in stage musicals, and a cruise ship division.

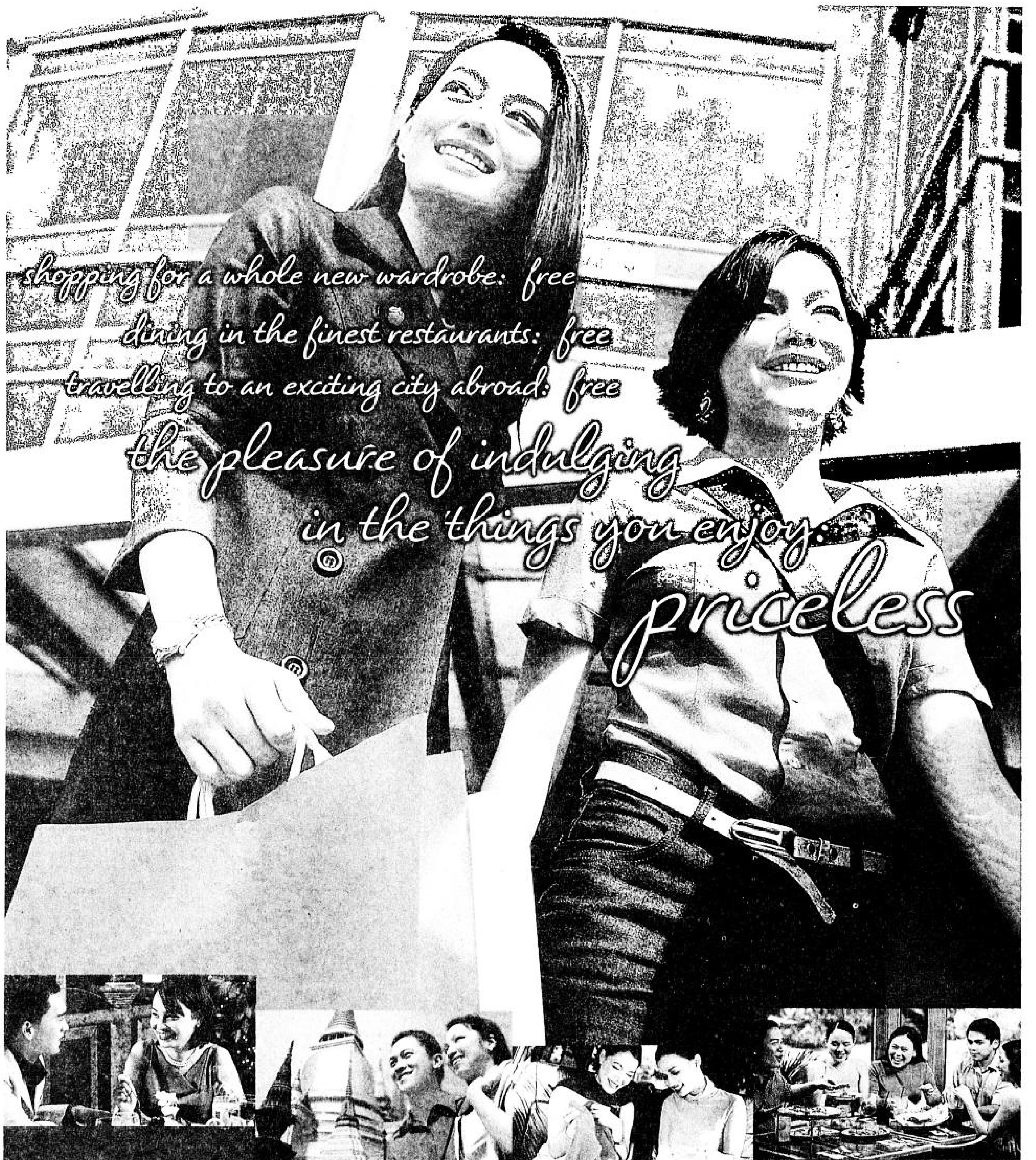
Disney became a byword for clean, wholesome family entertainment with his emphasis on sentimentality and nostalgia. Walt created the first Disneyland because he wanted to build a safe, clean place where parents and children could enjoy themselves together.

Even then it was billed as "the happiest place on earth."

"We're selling happiness. We don't like glum pusses or sour faces," his late brother and business partner Roy Disney remembered Walt saying of a curt employee who caught the boss' ire on the Disneyland railroad in the 1950s.

The magic of Walt Disney's personal myth has been chipped away in recent years by various biographies and documentaries revealing Disney as a control freak, lambasting the Disney empire of the 1950s and 1960s as sexist and regressive, and bewailing Disney's domination of popular culture.

Yet Walt Disney was a firm believer in his own myth. When preacher Billy Graham visited Disneyland in the early 1960s he congratulated Walt on having created "such a marvelous fantasy world," Disney replied. "The fantasy's outside."— *Reuters*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1st Monthly Draw: Jan. 15, 2002 (33 winners) • Rustan's Gift Certificates worth ₱10,000 each (8 winners) • Dish Gift Certificates worth ₱7,000 each (4 winners) • Chili's Gift Certificates worth ₱7,000 each (2 winners) • Don Henrico's Gift Certificates worth ₱7,000 each (2 winners) • Friday's Gift Certificates worth ₱7,000 each (2 winners) • Cash Credits worth ₱5,000 each (15 winners)

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3rd Monthly Draw: March 15, 2002 (33 winners) • Rustan's Gift Certificates worth ₱10,000 each (8 winners) • Dish Gift Certificates worth ₱7,000 each (2 winners) • El Comedor Gift Certificates worth ₱7,000 each (2 winners) • La Primavera Gift Certificates worth ₱7,000 each (2 winners) • Gloria Maris Gift Certificates worth ₱7,000 each (2 winners) • Sugi Gift Certificates worth ₱7,000 each (2 winners) • Cash Credits worth ₱5,000 each (15 winners)

Grand Draw: April 15, 2002 (5 winners) 1st: ₱1,000,000.00 (1 winner) 2nd: ₱500,000.00 (1 winner) 3rd: Trip for 2 to Bangkok (3 winners) (inclusive of: RT airfare, 4D/3N hotel accommodation, complimentary breakfasts & pocket money worth USD $500.)

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 4068, Series of 2001.

Televiewers choose their favorite quiz shows

BY ANDY BAIS

DE LEON. Entertaining.

AQUINO. Marked improvement.

MANZANO. Sarcastic and witty.

WHEN the popular TV quiz show "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?" debuted on IBC-13 a little over a year ago, no one thought that it would be a hit, except perhaps for Vic del Rosario, top honcho of the Viva conglomerate which holds the show's local franchise.

Clear indication

"WWTBM" started as a once a week show and is now shown five times a week—a clear indication that it is a certified hit. And true to the "if you can't lick 'em, join them" dictum, the giant networks have put up similar shows to counter the phenomenal rise of "WWTBM" in the rating charts.

Thus, we now have a heady brew of TV quiz shows to choose from: "Game Ka Na Ba?" on ABS-CBN; "The Weakest Link," another Viva franchise on IBC-13, and for a while "Korek Na Korek Ka Dyan" on GMA 7. Whether the Filipino televiewers' sudden fancy for this type of program becomes a longtime habit remains to be seen, however.

To know which quiz show is their favorite and why, we sampled 42 respondents. They are composed of housewives and, in some cases, their husbands and children who are mostly students. We also asked office workers, househelp and some of our friends.

In cases where we had households as respondents, we found out that each member had different preferences.

No surprise

Only one household voted unanimously for a particular program. This came as no surprise, however, simply because the household has only one television set. In instances like this, it is also interesting to note that children's preference have greater clout in deciding which program the household members watch.

Our mini survey revealed that "WWTBM" is the top favorite with 19 votes. The reasons commonly cited why viewers like it are its being "educational, exciting and the good choice of Christopher de Leon as host."

Singer and stage actress Rochel Venuti likes "WWTBM" because "the increasing level of difficulty in the questions asked and the corresponding increase in the prize money makes the audience hang on. They want to see *kung kaya pa ba itong sagutin ng* contestant. This makes the show more exciting, that's why in full force *kami* to watch it. *Maganda ring panoorin na galing sa buong bansa ang mga* contestants, and not concentrated only in Metro Manila."

Prodi Sirilan, an artist and stage director, extols "WWTBM:" It's funny, *dahil unahan kami pagsagot sa bahay. Kapag may nagkamali ng sagot, umaatikabong kantiyaw ang aabutin niya; may kasama namang* applause *kapag tama ang kanyang* answer. *Masyado kaming* engrossed *sa panonood, kaya* exciting!"

Lifelines

Writer Darwin Orbeso prefers "WWTBM" because it has well-structured mechanics and allows contestants to use their strategic skills through its lifelines.

However, he wishes that Boyet should refrain from asking obvious asides such *as "Masaya ka ba?"* or *"Kinakabahan ka ba?" "Nakikita naman nating ganun talaga ang* state *niya, tinatanong pa,"* he observes.

Efren Batuto, a field engineer from Antipolo City chooses "WWTBM" because "it has a good host. The show can't be that entertaining without Boyet. It is also much easier to reach the top pot money as compared to other quiz shows. You really have the chance to become a millionaire!

Rene Genove, a former bank employee, echoes Efren's observation and adds that "WWTBM" is very informative and the questions are both easy and difficult.

Jun Bongon, vascular technician at St. Luke's Hospital votes for "WWTBM:" "When I watch it, I am thrilled for the duration of the show. It's like watching a suspense movie, truly entertaining. OK *si* Boyet as host, *di gaya ng iba diyan."*

A retired teacher, Virginia Pagulayan, praises "WWTBM" because it has a well-researched set of questions. *"May mga tanong sila na ngayon ko lang alam ang kasagutan. Ayaw ko sa* 'The Weakest Link' *dahil hindi* fair *ang pag*-eliminate *ng mga* contestants. Imagine, *dahil* curly *lang ang hair ng isang* contestant, weakest link *na siya?"* she exclaims.

Mico M, a personal manager, is all for "WWTBM" because "it seems to be the most fair among all quiz shows. For me, Kris Aquino comes last as host *dahil nakikita ang* bias *niya* for a contestant, *lalo na kung ka*-chica *niya ang* celebrity contestant or *galing siya sa* UP or Ateneo. *Di rin siya marunong magpa*-suspense. However, all the quiz shows are educational, *marami akong natutunan."*

Simple format

May Corpuz, an NGO officer lauds "WWTBM" *"kasi* greater *ang* chance *na mananalo. Simple pati ang* format. *Medyo hindi nga lang bagay as* host *si* Christopher, *pero puwede na rin* compared to others. *Gusto ko rin ang necktie niya."*

ABS-CBN's "Game Ka Na Ba?" emerged as our respondents' second favorite, with 12 votes. Leda Jacinto, executive secretary in Davao City, confesses that "GKNB" is her only choice because "our TV sets are glued to ABS-CBN on weeknights for the TV dramas after homework time with the kids. But we, especially the kids, now look forward to it every night because it is exciting, fast-paced and we learn new things. The kids sometimes join in coaching the contestants as if the contestants can hear them. My husband is amused at the way Kris speaks."

Sure winner

Musical arranger and composer Fred Ferraz favors "GKNB" over its competitors because it has a sure winner everyday. "It is also educational and contestants can choose their own category of questions. Kris has improved a lot, OK *din siyang mag* explain *ng tanong,"* he adds.

Viema Picazo, an NHA employee likes "GKNB" because "it is light, fun and financially rewarding to many people. 'WWTBM' is boring while The Weakest Link' espouses negative values."

Benedick Tinawin, a civil engineering graduate from La Salle Taft, praises "GKNB;" *"Maganda ang* format *ng* show; *madali lang sagutin ang mga* questions *at* effective *ang pag*-eliminate *ng mga* contestants. It has also the fun element which is absent in other quiz shows *dahil dinidibdib talaga ang pagsagot ng* questions *dahil mahirap naman kasi.* I also find Kris' hosting style as natural. *Nandoon talaga ang* trademark boses *at* gestures *niya na medyo kolehiyala na malandi."*

Bong Domingo claims to be jobless at present but he still finds time to watch "GKNB," his favorite quiz show. "It's solely for Kris Aquino. Before *medyo* OA *siya*, but now I enjoy her *na* dahil clear *siya magsalita*, she's always smiling and her voice is *malambing*," he adds.

Generous

Che-Che Pio Roda, a nurse at St. Luke's Hospital, is another "GKNB" loyalist. She exclaims: "It really excites me when I watch it. It's not only entertaining but it is generous as well. Studio contestants and the thousands of texters are given the chance to win."

IBC-13's 'The Weakest Link' comes in as our respondents' third favorite, garnering nine votes.

Jingo Generoso, a training consultant approves of "TWL" mainly because of its host. *"Magaling si* Edu, he performs the role of the poker-faced host. *Hindi* trying-hard *ang dating.* I also like the show's format, it is something new and different."

Macky Corpuz, a senior high school student, agrees with his uncle Jingo and adds, *"Nakakatuwa din ang mga sagot ng mga* contestants. I find it more exciting than other quiz shows because it is fast-paced."

Fast-paced

Entertainment writer Jocelyn Valle has high praises for "TWL:" "It is fast-paced; has a good mix of easy, average and difficult questions, and has a sensible, knowledgeable, sarcastic and witty host in Edu Manzano. I hate it though when the contestants are not so bright, thus slowing down the pace of the show."

Sandy Manuel, a Neda division chief in Cebu, gives her all for "TWL:" "Without a doubt, it's my choice because I get a kick out of Edu's sarcastic comments. I laugh a lot."

Surprisingly, "The Digital LG Quiz," a show for high school students which is telecast on GMA 7 on Sundays, 10-11 a.m., has its share of two admirers making it on the fourth and last spot. Carlos Morre, a government employee from Davao City, prefers "LG Quiz" *"kasi* intelligent *ang* mga host *nito na sina* Paolo Bediones *at* Regine Tolentino *at hindi sila* OA."

Finally, Ed Dames, an advertising man, also praises "LG Quiz:" "It is educational, has a good set, and professional hosts. The two popular Viva shows are full of inanities and are no different from lotto."

JRR Tolkien, the man who loved myths

TOLKIEN. Linguistic expertise.

LONDON—Before writing "Lord of the Rings," the inspiration for an eagerly awaited film which has its world premiere here Monday, John Ronald Reuel Tolkien was a university professor with a consuming passion for rare, historical languages.

Trilogy

"The Fellowship of the Ring," the first installment in a trilogy, is predicted to be one of the big successes of the year, competing with the massively popular "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone" ("Sorcerer's Stone" in the United States).

The new film's fortunes will be boosted by legions of Tolkien fans devoted to works that have stirred the popular imagination for decades.

"Lord of the Rings," starring Elijah Wood, Ian McKellen, Cate Blanchett, Christopher Lee and Liv Tyler, was filmed in New Zealand, the home of director Peter Jackson.

The trilogy was shot all in one go for a total sum of around $190 million (214 million euros).

Born in 1892 in South Africa and brought up in Birmingham, central England, by his mother and then by a Catholic priest, the young Tolkien discovered early in life the intricate delights of ancient tongues.

After mastering Latin and Greek, the staple ingredients of an arts education at that time, he became more than competent in a number of other languages, both modern and ancient, notably Gothic, and later Finnish.

Logical development

The logical development for someone blessed with Tolkien's vivid imagination and linguistic expertise was to make up new languages, something he continued to do for the rest of his life.

After gaining a first class degree from Oxford University—where he helped compile the Oxford English dictionary—Tolkien was named English Language professor at Leeds University, north England, in 1920.

Tolkien combined his lectures at Leeds, and at Oxford where he was named Anglo-Saxon professor in 1925, with the writing of books, some inspired by the tales that he would tell his own children.

These stories were full of myths and magic, of strange creatures, of dwarves, elves, goblins and wizards.

These all used languages invented by the author, including Quenya and Sindarin, both spoken by elves. They had up to 2,000 words and their own rules of grammar.

"Tolkien wanted to invent characters who spoke these languages and to invent a world in which these characters could evolve," Vincent Ferre, an expert on Tolkien, told AFP.

"The Hobbit," published in 1937, was Tolkien's literary breakthrough.

The book sold so well that his publishing house asked immediately for more, similar material.

JRR/p.C5

Kuh segues into 2002 with 'On Higher Ground'

KUH, right, and daughter Isabella.

IN her career and personal life, 2001 has been a most challenging year for Kuh Ledesma.

The fire that gutted the Republic of Malate was the biggest crisis Kuh has had to face this year. But this and other challenges have only served to strengthen Kuh's faith. "When the fire happened, I wasn't bothered because I knew there was a reason for it," says Kuh. "God used these things to test my faith and bring me to another level of spirituality," she says.

Inspiration

That "new level," that "higher ground" provided the inspiration for the pop diva's forthcoming concert series. Titled "On Higher Ground," it is a reflection of Kuh's newfound inner peace. Set for Dec. 29, Jan. 4 and 5 at the Music Museum, it will be an evening of inspirational songs that will lift people's spirits.

Kuh says that allowing God to take her to that higher ground has even made her a better person. Says the pop diva: "Now, everything seems less of a burden. Before, it seemed like I was just going through the motions when singing. Of course, I love what I do, but my joy wasn't complete. It seemed I was always chasing something. But now God has really shown me what it is to have joy in my life. I enjoy my work so much more. And best of all, I have a clearer idea of why I'm singing. There's a purpose to it now."

New album

And not only is she going back to the concert scene, she is also busy preparing for a new album, a gospel/inspirational album, a first in her career. Titled "Walking on Water," it will be an interesting mix of originals and remakes that Kuh is planning to produce herself under her own Bravo records.

She is still not sure whether Viva Records, her home studio (which released her last album, "Duet With Me") will be distributing it. "I haven't talked to Vic (del Rosario) about it, but this is something I would really like to do." The album may be released in March or April 2002.

Before that, however, Kuh will busy herself with preparations for her "On Higher Ground" concert. It will feature her daughter Isabella, who will be joining Kuh for all the shows. It will be the first time in a long while that mother and daughter are performing together in a concert.

But what Kuh is most excited about is having different divas as her guests for the concert: Dec. 29, Pilita Corrales, Jan. 4, Regine Velasquez, and Jan. 5, Nora Aunor! Call 551-7255 to 55.

YOUR WEEKLY TV GUIDE FROM DEC 29 – JAN 4

CH	2	4	5	7	9	13	23	29	[illegible]
	5:30 Magandang Gabi, Bayan 7:00 Arriba, Arriba 8:00 Mary D' Potter 9:00 Da Pilya en Da Pilot 10:00 Kakasa Ka Ba? 10:30 Sapul Kayo Dyan 11:00 "F" 11:30 Sports Unlimited	6:00 Auto Review 6:30 Uncut 7:00 Saturday Primetime Special 9:00 The Bodyguards 10:00 Explore with Mike 11:00 Auto Focus 11:30 Fox News	6:30 Wing Commander 7:00 Sailormoon Super S 7:30 Wheel of Fortune 8:00 Celebrity Feud 8:30 Wow Mali! 9:30 Eezy Dancing 10:30 Saturday Night Specials *Cliff Richard: The Countdown Concert*	5:30 Imbestigador 6:30 Korek na Korek Ka Dyan 7:00 Idol Ko Si Kap 8:00 Kakabakaba 9:00 Pinoy Blockbuster 11:00 Master Showman Presents	6:00 Star Trek 7:00 Special Unit II 8:00 Strange World 9:00 Saturday Night Playhouse *Wolfgang: Live on Stage* 11:00 Roaming 12:00 PGMA	8:00 Who Wants To Be A Millionaire? 9:00 Kagat Ng Dilim 11:00 IBC Elorde	6:00 Digital Tour 6:30 G2 Living 7:00 Explorer 7:30 Early Edition 8:30 Gilmore Girls 9:30 Studio 23 Presents 12:00 MYX Sampler	3:00 Q Show Case 7:00 Xclusive Cinema Special 9:00 Oras ng Katotohanan 9:30 Armor of God 10:00 Oh Tokyo 11:00 Pinoy Wrestling	6:00 CBS Evening News 6:30 E! Coming Attractions 7:00 Celebrity Profile *Barbara Streisand* 8:00 "The Way We Were" 10:00 David Letterman 11:00 E! News Special 11:30 Extreme Close Up *Cranberries*
	5:30 Sharon 7:00 Digimon 7:30 Wansapanataym 9:00 Pinoy Exposed 9:30 ABS-CBN Presents 11:30 Off The Record 12:00 The Weekend News	3:00 MBA 8:00 Street Legal 9:00 Sunday's Big Showdown 11:00 Business & Leisure 11:30 Fox News	6:00 Zorro 6:30 Guyferd 7:00 Price is Right 8:00 Sing-Galing 9:00 The Big Night *Kenny Loggins: December/ Winter Solstice* 11:00 Sentinel	5:30 Partners Mel and Jay 7:00 Pokemon 7:30 Sinerama 9:30 Sunday Night Box Office 11:30 Che-Che Lazaro Presents	6:00 Entertainment This Weekend 7:00 Ripley's Believe It or Not 8:00 Where in Time is Carmen San Diego 8:30 Kids Say the Darndest Thing 9:00 Sunday's Big Event *John Paul II: The Millennium Pope* 11:00 Sunday Report	4:00 PBA Game 1 6:30 PBA Game 2 8:30 Who Wants To Be A Millionaire? 9:30 Sinemaks 11:30 El Shaddai	6:00 Starship Troopers 6:30 Rugrats 7:00 Batman Beyond 7:30 Futurama 8:00 Bette 8:30 Veronica's Closet 9:00 Will & Grace 9:30 Murder in Smalltown X 10:30 Twilight Zone 11:00 News Central	5:00 Quartermaster Window Shop 7:00 Sunday Mini-Series 8:00 Oh Tokyo 9:00 Sunday Night Movies 11:00 Bikini Open	6:00 CBS Evening News 6:30 E! Coming Attractions 7:00 Holiday On Eyes *The King and I* 9:30 Extreme Close-Up *Anna & the King* 10:00 "Suddenly, I'm a Star" 11:00 60 Minutes
	6:00 TV Patrol 7:00 Game K N B? 8:30 Pangako sa 'Yo 9:00 Sa Dulo ng Walang Hanggan 9:30 Sa Puso Ko, Iingatan Ka 10:00 FPJ Action Cinema 11:00 Headlines 11:30 The Correspondents	5:00 Metro TV 6:00 Value Vision 7:00 Sigaw 8:00 Tele-Dyaryo 10:00 Speed 11:00 Unlimited Diving	6:00 Balitang-Balita 6:30 F 7:00 Mahha Go Go Go 7:30 Wheel Of Fortune 8:00 Family Feud 8:30 Touched By An Angel 9:30 Trabaho Lang 10:00 The Big News 10:30 High Tide	6:00 Saksi 6:30 DragonballZ 7:00 Sorceror Hunter 7:30 Sana ay Ikaw Na Nga 8:00 Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin 8:30 Monica Brava 9:00 GMA's Best 11:00 Front Page 11:30 I-Witness	5:30 Arangkada Xtra Balita 6:00 Sin Ti 6:30 Real TV 7:00 Becker 7:30 Arliss 8:00 World's Most Amazing Videos 9:00 The X-Files 10:00 Newswatch Now 10:30 Entertainment Tonight 11:00 Sex & The City	5:30 Viva Music Channel 6:30 Viva Box Office 8:30 Who Wants To Be A Millionaire? 9:30 The Weakest Link 10:30 Por Un Beso 11:00 Ronda Trese 11:30 Good Take	6:00 Beat UK 7:00 Primetime Classics 7:30 The Nanny 8:00 Dark Angel 9:00 Charmed 10:00 News Central 10:30 Points of View 11:30 Jenny Jones 12:00 MYX Sampler	4:30 Quartermaster 6:30 Q Showcase 7:30 Oras ng Katotohanan 8:00 Q Showcase 9:00 Ang Dating Daan 10:00 Q Showcase	6:00 CBS Evening News 6:30 E! News Daily 7:00 In Focus *Only in Hollywood* 8:00 Mysteries and Scandals *Clark Gable* 8:30 Bathing Brooke: The Making of Brooke's 2002 Calendar 9:30 E! News Daily 10:00 60 Minutes
	6:00 TV Patrol 7:00 Game K N B? 8:30 Pangako sa 'Yo 9:00 Sa Dulo ng Walang Hanggan 9:30 Sa Puso Ko, Iingatan Ka 10:00 Oka Tokat 10:30 Kabalikat 11:00 Headlines 11:30 Mission X	5:00 Value Vision 6:00 Fox News 8:00 Tele-Dyaryo 10:00 Pulsong Masa 11:00 Fox News	6:00 Balitang-Balita 6:30 Dragon League 7:00 2 Years Vacation w/ Dinosaurs 7:30 Wheel of Fortune 8:00 Family Feud 8:30 E.R. 9:30 Urban Doktor 10:00 The Big News 10:30 FX The Series	6:00 Saksi 6:30 DragonballZ 7:00 Sorcerer Hunter 7:30 Sana ay Ikaw Na Nga 8:00 Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin 8:30 Monica Brava 9:00 Kool Ka Lang 10:00 Kasangga 11:00 Front Page 11:30 The Probe Team	5:30 Arangkada Xtra Balita 6:00 Sin Ti 6:30 Real TV 7:00 Ed 8:00 Ally McBeal 9:00 The Practice 10:00 Newswatch Now 10:30 Entertainment Tonight 11:30 The Extremist	6:30 Viva Box Office 8:30 Who Wants To Be A Millionaire? 9:30 The Weakest Link 10:30 Por Un Beso 11:00 Ronda Trese 11:30 Good Take	6:00 Later with Jools 7:00 Priemtime Classics 7:30 Popular 8:30 The Others 9:30 Just Shoot Me 10:00 News Central 10:30 Oprah 11:30 Zine 12:00 MYX Sampler	4:30 Quartermaster 6:30 Q Showcase 7:30 Oras ng Katotohanan 8:00 Ang Dating Daan (Live)	6:30 E! News Daily 7:00 Movies on E! *The Sound of Music* 10:00 E! News Special 11:00 Uncut 11:30 Extreme Close Up 12:00 Talk Soup
	6:00 TV Patrol 7:00 Game K N B? 8:30 Pangako sa 'Yo 9:00 Sa Dulo ng Walang Hanggan 9:30 Sa Puso Ko, Iingatan Ka 10:00 Whattamen 10:30 Your Honor 11:00 Headlines 11:30 iSYU 101	4:00 MBA 8:00 Tele-Dyaryo 10:00 Paco Park Presents 11:00 Fox News	6:00 Balitang-Balita 6:30 Pygmalio 7:00 Time Quest 7:30 Wheel of Fortune 8:00 Family Feud 8:30 Friends 9:00 That '70s Show 9:30 Planet X 10:00 The Big News 10:30 Philippines Most Wanted	6:00 Saksi 6:30 DragonballZ 7:00 Sorcerer Hunter 7:30 Sana ay Ikaw Na Nga 8:00 Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin 8:30 Monica Brava 9:00 Beh Bote Nga 10:00 Larawan 11:00 Front Page 11:30 Jessica Soho Reports	5:30 Arangkada Xtra Balita 6:00 Sin Ti 6:30 Real TV 7:00 Level 9 8:00 Roswell 9:00 Buffy the Vampire Slayer 10:00 Newswatch Now 10:30 Entertainment Tonight 11:00 Wrestling	5:00 PBA Game 1 7:30 PBA Game 2 9:30 The Weakest Link 10:30 Por Un Beso 11:00 Ronda Trese 11:30 Good Take	6:00 New Music 6:30 Soundcheck 7:00 Priemtime Classics 7:30 Scariest Places 8:30 Game Plan 9:00 The District 10:00 News Central 10:30 Oprah	4:30 Quartermaster 6:30 Q Showcase 7:30 Oras ng Katotohanan 8:00 Q Showcase 9:00 Ang Dating Daan 10:00 Q Showcase	6:00 CBS Evening News 6:30 E! News Daily 7:00 In Focus 8:00 Mysteries And Scandals 8:30 Search Party 9:00 Fashion Emergency 9:30 E! News Daily 10:00 David Letterman 11:00 Wild On *Sunset Strip* 12:00 Talk Soup
	6:00 TV Patrol 7:00 Game K N B? 8:30 Pangako sa 'Yo 9:00 Sa Dulo ng Walang Hanggan 9:30 Sa Puso Ko, Iingatan Ka 10:00 Attagirl 10:30 Maalaala Mo Kaya 11:00 Headlines 11:30 Pipol	4:00 Shop @ Home 5:00 Value Vision 6:00 Fox News 8:00 Tele-Dyaryo 10:00 Concert At The Park 11:00 Fora Medica	6:00 Balitang-Balita 6:30 Shulato 7:00 Fancy Lala 7:30 Wheel of Fortune 8:00 Family Feud 8:30 Guinnes World Records 9:30 The Exchange 10:00 The Big News 10:30 By Request	6:00 Saksi 6:30 DragonballZ 7:00 Sorcerer Hunter 7:30 Sana ay Ikaw Na Nga 8:00 Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin 8:30 Monica Brava 9:00 Daddy Di Do Du 10:00 Sa Dako Pa Roon 11:00 Front Page 11:30 Debate with Mare at Pare	5:30 Arangkada Xtra Balita 6:00 Sin Ti 6:30 Real TV 7:00 Clueless 8:00 Felicity 9:00 Once and Again 10:00 Newswatch Now 10:30 Entertainment Tonight 11:00 48 Hours	6:30 Viva Box Office 8:30 Who Wants To Be A Millionaire? 9:30 The Weakest Link 10:30 Por Un Beso 11:00 Ronda Trese 11:30 Good Take	6:00 Behind The Music 7:00 Priemtime Classics 7:30 Cineplex 23 9:30 Guide to Urban Living 10:00 News Central 10:30 Oprah 11:30 Travel Time 12:00 MYX Sampler	4:30 Quartermaster 6:30 Q Showcase 7:30 Oras ng Katotohanan 8:00 Q Showcase 9:00 Ang Dating Daan 10:00 Q Showcase	6:00 CBS Evening News 6:30 E! News Daily 7:00 Celebrity Profile *Jim Carey* 8:00 E! True Hollywood Story 9:00 Celebrity Homes 9:30 E! News Daily 10:30 David Letterman 11:00 Uncut 11:30 Extreme Close Up 12:00 Talk Soup
	6:00 TV Patrol 7:00 Game K N B? 8:30 Pangako sa 'Yo 9:00 Sa Dulo ng Walang Hanggan 9:30 Sa Puso Ko, Iingatan Ka 10:00 Star Cinema Presents 11:00 Headlines 11:30 True Crime	4:00 MBA 8:00 Tele-Dyaryo 10:00 Patrol 117 11:00 Fox News	6:00 Balitang-Balita 6:30 Lazer Patrol 7:00 Starcom 7:30 Wheel Of Fortune 8:00 Family Feud 8:30 Ispup 9:30 On-Air 10:00 The Big News 10:30 Friday Box Office	6:00 Saksi 6:30 DragonballZ 7:00 Sorcerer Hunter 7:30 Sana ay Ikaw Na Nga 8:00 Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin 8:30 Monica Brava 9:00 Bubble Gang 10:00 GMA Love Stories 11:00 Front Page 11:30 Emergency	5:30 Arangkada Xtra Balita 6:00 Sin Ti 6:30 Real TV 7:00 That's Life 8:00 Dharma & Greg 8:30 Nikki 9:00 Largo 10:00 Newswatch Now 10:30 TV Greats on Friday	5:00 PBA Game 1 7:30 PBA Game 2 9:30 The Weakest Link 10:30 Por Un Beso 11:00 Ronda Trese 11:30 Good Take	6:00 Halo-Halo 7:00 Priemtime CLassics 7:30 Survivor Africa 8:30 Mortal Combat 9:30 Oh Grow Up! 10:00 News Central 10:30 Oprah 11:30 Jenny Jones 12:30 MYX Sampler	4:30 Quartermaster 6:30 Q Showcase 7:30 Oras ng Katotohanan 8:00 Ang Dating Daan (Live)	6:00 CBS Evening News 6:30 E! News Daily 7:00 In Focus *High Rollers #2* 8:00 Mysteries & Scandals 8:30 Search Party 9:00 Fashion Emergency 9:30 E! News Daily 10:00 David Letterman 11:00 Wild On *Champs Elysee* 12:00 Talk Soup

Bruce Springsteen and the E-Street Band on Star World on New Year's Day

HE'S been a rock 'n' roll legend for 30 years, performed live at hundreds of stadiums and sold millions of records. Now Bruce Springsteen highlights his history-making career and marks the millennium with his first-ever televised special "Bruce Springsteen and the E-Street Band Concert," airing on Tuesday, Jan. 1, 2002 at 8 p.m. and 11:30 p.m., only on Star World.

Two-hour special

The two-hour special was recorded live in front of a packed Madison Square Garden in New York City on June 29 and July 1, 2000 (the last two performances of the band's phenomenally successful 1999-2000 world tour) and reunites Springsteen and the E-Street Band who went their separate ways in 1989. If you're a music fan you known that nothing matches seeing Springsteen and company perform live, and this event is no exception with such classics as "My Love Will Not Let You Down," "Prove It All Night," "Two Hearts," and the beautiful new song "Land of Hope and Dreams" ringing through the night.

The concert was a powerful and moving occasion. As producer-songwriter and fellow E-Street Band member Stave Van Zandt commented later: "What we're communicating is community, is unity, is solidarity. Maybe it reminds us of something we should be reminded about." It's a genuine feeling that was also evident in their opening performance for the recently aired "America: A Tribute To Heroes" benefit telethon on Star World.

SPRINGSTEEN. Has released 20 albums in the course of his career.

Rock 'n' roll's future

Former Rolling Stone critic Jon Landau exclaimed, "I saw rock 'n' roll's future, and its name is Bruce Springsteen." He was right. Nicknamed "The Boss," Bruce Springsteen is one of the few living rock 'n' roll legends. Born in Freehold, New Jersey on Sept. 23, 1949, he lived the blue-collar ethic that has empowered his music and gained hard-earned experience playing in local bands around his native New Jersey. Even after signing with a major label, his first two albums sold poorly, but word of mouth spread that there was something special about this working-class musician.

Springsteen broke through in 1974 with the now legendary "Born to Run," an album that supported the hype that surrounded him as "the savior of rock 'n' roll." Over the decades since, he has released 20 albums, both solo and with the E-Street Band, including "Darkness on the Edge of Town" and "Born in the USA."

Springsteen parted ways with the E-Street Band in 1989 and released acclaimed solo projects, most notably "Streets of Philadelphia" in 1993 for the movie "Philadelphia," which won him several Grammys and an Academy award.

Don't miss the Boss taking his fans to the musical promised land. Watch "Bruce Springsteen and the E-Street Band Concert," on Tuesday, Jan. 1 2002 at 8 p.m. and 11:30 p.m., exclusively on Star World. (With replays on Wednesday, Jan 2 at 2:30 a.m. and 11 a.m.)

JRR Tolkien, the man who loved myths

(From page C4)

But they had to wait 16 years until Tolkien finished the colossal work "The Lord of the Rings."

The book, published between 1954 and 1955 in three parts for commercial reasons, is considered by fans to be one of literature's most complex and imaginative masterpieces.

"The Lord of the Rings" became an international bestseller when it came out in paperback in the United States in 1965.

US campuses were gripped by Tolkien fever and a cult-like fan club spread his works to a worldwide audience.

After his retirement in 1969, Tolkien and his wife Edith moved to Bournemouth, southern England, but he returned to Oxford soon after Edith's death in 1971.

He died on Sept. 2, 1973 and was buried with his wife in a grave in the Catholic section of Wolvercote cemetery in the northern suburbs of the city where he spent many of his most creative moments.

The second part of the trilogy, "The Two Towers," will be released in December of next year, while fans of the enchanted world of Middle-earth and its inhabitants of humans, hobbits, elves, dwarves, wizards, trolls and orcs have to wait until the end of 2004 to catch the final part, "The Return of the King."

AFP

Nida Blanca and her horoscope

By Jess L. Banguis

I WAS armed when I confronted Nida Blanca years ago at the portico of her former residence in Cubao, Quezon City. And I was wearing dark glasses. She was alone in her house except for her mother.

I was armed with a horoscope because I wanted to peg my interview with her along astral lines.

Unguarded moments

The dark glasses were to put her at ease, so she would not see my searching eyes watching her actions and reactions, like peeping through a keyhole observing her unguarded moments as she answered my jumbled questions.

Knowing how women fidget when asked about their age, I led off with a casual-sounding "What is your birthmonth?"

"Jan. 6, 1936!" she snapped back.

Because the sixth of January used to be celebrated as Three Kings Day, I remarked that she must have been brought into the world by the trio.

For a moment she said nothing, as if trying to figure out what I just said. Then she suddenly smiled and said, "That's right!"

Smile

I cannot forget her smile, so natural and soft. Were she one of today's highly-paid actresses, she would have burst into the usual open-mouthed plastic ha-ha, and then clamped shut just as soon!

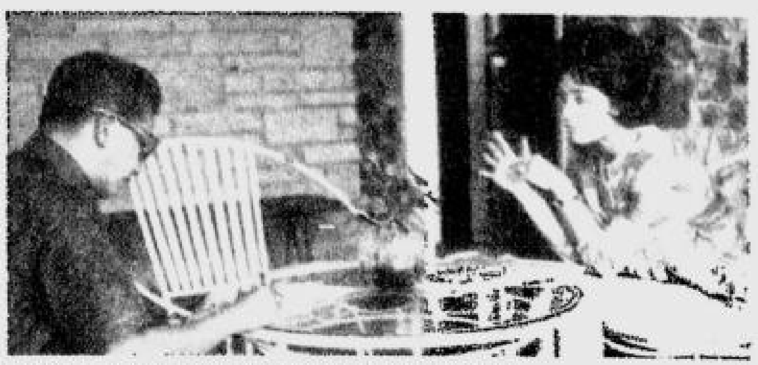
"What is it that you don't like in men and women both in and out of show biz?" was my second question.

Her reply was fast and sharp, "I hate people who don't keep their word!"

I followed up with, "According to your birthsign, yours is a charming and devoted marital life if your partner is born under Taurus, Cancer or Virgo."

"When is that?" she cut in knitting her brows. I read from the horoscope: "Between April 20 and May 20, June 21 and July 22 and Aug. 23 to Sept. 22."

She just smiled wryly.



BANGUIS (left) interviewing Nida in the '60s.

To bring her back to reality, I asked, "Why do you want to stay in pictures?" I had a purpose in asking this.

"Keeps me busy" was her curt reply.

"Why do you want to keep busy?" I was really trying to get something out of her.

"Well, you know when one is busy, there's no time for personal problems, frustrations, worries . . ., " she sighed.

I felt I was on track because her horoscope averred that she could go through melancholic fantasies.

Lawyer

It also foresaw that she could be a lawyer, a judge or a real estate broker, if not a singer or an actress.

Nida Blanca was a singer before she crashed into the movies.

She said that Manuel Conde, one of the greatest Filipino movie directors, screentested her for a role in his costume picture, "Siete Infantes de Lara," and director Efren Reyes for his picture "Bandido" and Sampaguita Pictures' "Maputing Kamay."

Neither of the three productions took her in. Reason: She looked too young. She was then only 14 years old.

When did she finally break into the world of make-believe?

"It was Delia Razon," she said, "who made me wear extra-high-heeled shoes and a flowing skirt and introduced me to Doña Sisang, owner of LVN Pictures."

According to her, after asking Delia "Who is this *Americana* child?" the grand old lady of Philippine filmdom said no more and forgot all about her.

But there was no stopping her ascent up the stairway to the stars. She was really meant to take a front seat in the chronology of Philippine cinema.

Sometime later, Doña Sisang spotted her picture among young aspirants' photographs. After ascertaining that it really was the "*Americana* child" she had met earlier, she sent for her and made her go through the requisites. That was it! She signed up, her name was changed and all roads pointed her to her destiny.

Top screen idol

When she was paired with Rogelio de la Rosa, the country's top screen idol, there were doubts about her fitting her role. But Roger, the star of the movie, and Nemesio Caravana, its director, both told the producer they would waive their fees if Nida did not live up to expectations. She did!

It may be a long time before another Nida Blanca appears on the show biz horizon. Of course, there could be copycats, impersonators, even clones in the future. But Nida Blanca was not made, she was born. She, with the bubbling effervescent naturalness ribboned with sincere simplicity. She made people around her feel very comfortable.

As I glued my eyes on her through my dark glasses, she appeared to me as a winning package of so much friendliness and understanding that I would not hesitate to show her if there were holes in my socks.

Before I left, she introduced me to her mother and her new love: six-month-old Cathryn.

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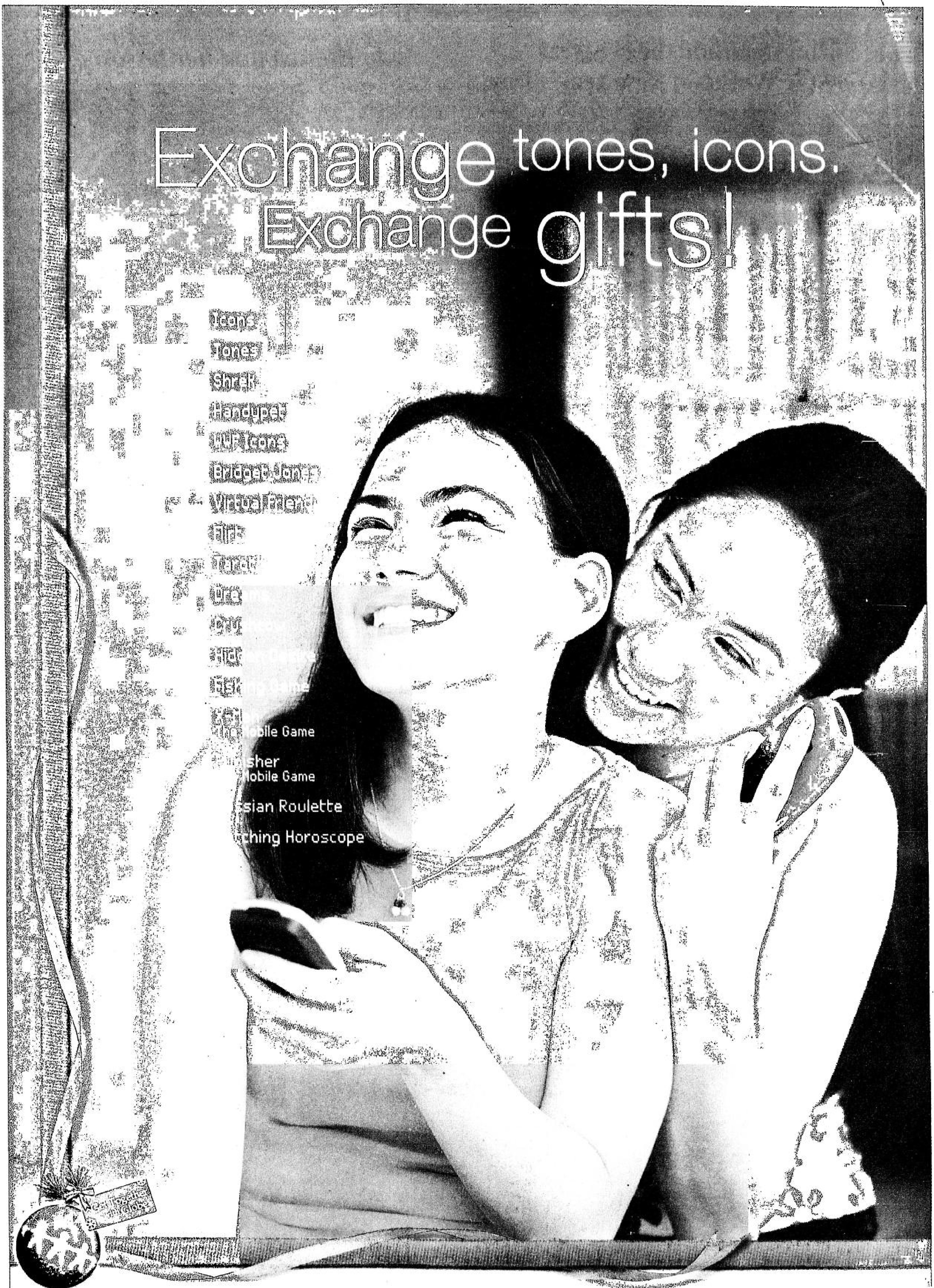
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myGlobe has plenty of unexpected gift ideas, exciting games and surprises so you and your friends can have a good falalala-laugh this Christmas. Look under the category Fun & Games

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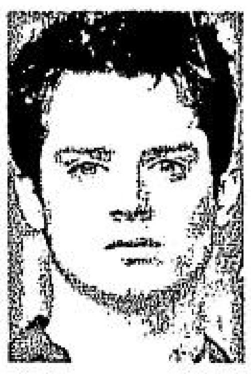
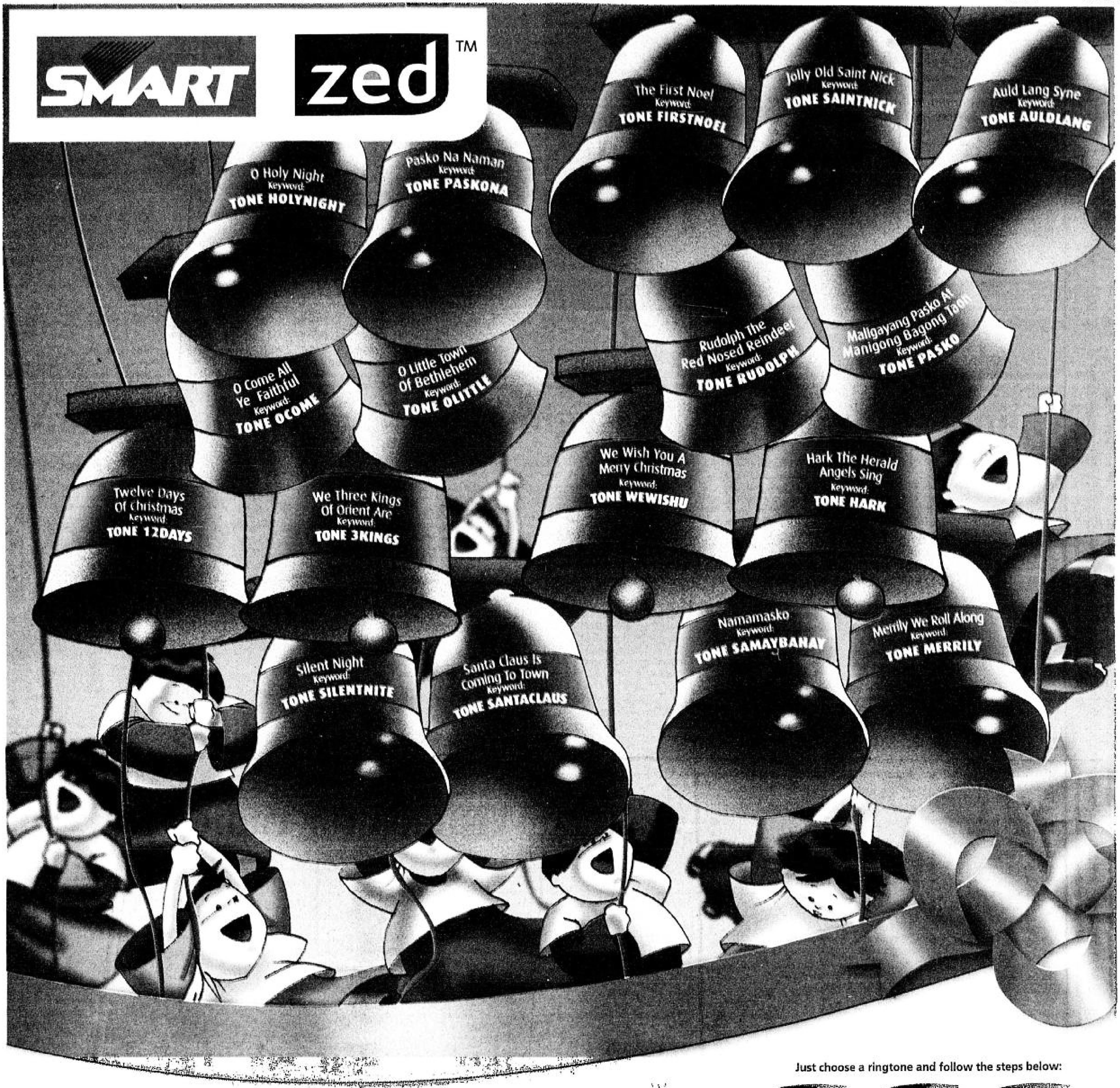


ELIJAH Wood stars in "Lord of the Rings."

'Lord of the Rings' runs rings around 'Harry Potter,' critics say

(Story on page D2)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Rudolph The Red Nosed Reindeer Keyword: TONE RUDOLPH
Maligayang Pasko At Manigong Bagong Taon Keyword: TONE PASKO
O Come All Ye Faithful Keyword: TONE OCOME
O Little Town Of Bethlehem Keyword: TONE OLITTLE
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Hark The Herald Angels Sing Keyword: TONE HARK
Twelve Days Of Christmas Keyword: TONE 12DAYS
We Three Kings Of Orient Are Keyword: TONE 3KINGS
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Disney on Ice show at the Big Dome is a cool treat

By Nestor U. Torre

CHARACTERS from 'The Lion King' on ice skates.

LAST Dec. 21, we had the pleasure of catching a preview performance of Disney's latest ice-skating spectacular at the Araneta Coliseum.

Winning combination

The evening was a winning combination of familiar Disney characters come alive on ice skates, popular tunes, creative production design, imaginative lighting, eventful choreography—plus the enthusiastic response of hundreds of little children in the audience, whose squeals of delight were an important component of the show's Christmas gift basket of delights.

The show proceeded briskly with one choreographed production number after another, showcasing the capsule storylines of classic fairy tales and Disney's antic way of updating them.

The champion skaters who did the solo spots wowed the crowd with their complex, thrilling routines, which grew increasingly more daunting as the evening progressed.

An early highlight was the grand entrance of the whale that swallowed Pinocchio and his father. One marvelled at how that huge prop was cannily constructed so that it could be folded, accordion-style, for the troupe's voyage from country to country, and then expanded to full size for use in performances, with nary a sign of wear and tear.

Castle

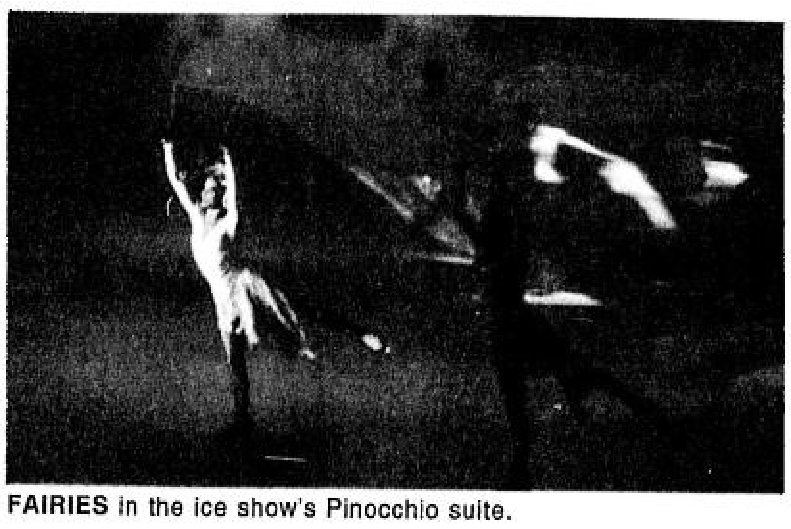
The show's main set also caught our attention as it gradually revealed all the different things it could be, and do. The set was basically a castle with a drawbridge, through which entered a dazzling variety of fantasy characters who delighted the youngsters in the audience with their fun antics and childlike qualities.

But *the* best element in the show's first half was the "It's A Small World" production number that had the entire cast dressed in different national costumes—all in shades of blue and eggshell-white.

Each pair of skaters even had its own self-propelled arch to give the number greater style and sparkle, specially when each arch's battery-operated running lights were switched on to strut their fancy stuff.

The Filipino pair in the ensemble danced the *tinikling* with imaginary bamboo poles and brought the house down, specially because the male skater looked like he could have been genuinely Pinoy.

But the Filipino tandem wasn't really the main focus of the long, eventful number, just a lively divertissement that won over the local crowd. The *entire* "It's A Small World" number was a hit from start to finish.


FAIRIES in the ice show's Pinocchio suite.

Relative dud

After the intermission, however, the evening's excitement dipped. An ice hockey number turned out to be a relative dud. Thankfully, it was followed by more entertaining numbers, many of them taken from Disney's more recent musical films, like "Mulan" and "The Lion King."

It's a good idea to update the Disney mystique so that it isn't made up exclusively of the studio's classics, but it turned out that the modern musicals weren't as effective as ice-show components as the more lyrical traditional fairytales.

For example, the big battle scene in "Mulan" didn't translate well into ice-skating choreography. The "Aladdin" numbers were more effective, however.

All in all, the Disney ice show's first half was more rewarding and entertaining than its second half. But, seen as a whole, the show is an enjoyable package that should be seen by one and all—from three to 103.

Original compositions in Regine Velasquez's latest album

By Edmund L. Sicam

VIVA's boardroom was too stiff a setting for a session with Regine Velasquez, who thrives in an informal environment. But that didn't dampen the spirits of the Songbird. She was her usual bubbly self as she talked about her latest album.

Packaging

The album, "Reigne" consists of original compositions by Janno Gibbs, Babsie Molina, Moy Ortiz and Trina Belamide, among others. The album was also produced by Regine herself. The packaging of the CD is not the usual square plastic case, but rather a rectangular paper case with a booklet containing the songs' lyrics and pictures of Regine like she's never been seen before.

The booklet's cover has pictures of Regine in acrobatic poses and sexy outfits. *"Nagtutuwad lang ako diyan!"* she jokes when asked if she was the one who thought up the poses. Inside, Regine sports long Bo Derek-"10"- type braids. One of the more memorable pictures is of Regine in a white, semi-see-through blouse. We kidded her that she could very well be the next calendar girl for liquor companies.

The singer says she just wanted a new look for this album, "*Para maiba lang ng konti,*" she explains. All the shots, save for one (which was shot in a studio) were taken at her house in Bulacan by noted photographer Jun de Leon.

Carrier single

The album's carrier single is the song "To Reach You", composed by Lisa Diy and Chat Zamora. Regine shares that these two tunesmiths are actually lawyers who have long been giving their songs to her, even before she became a star.

The CD's package has a gold necklace with the word "Reigne" written in gold. At first glance, it looked like a typographical error. But Regine says she did this on purpose. She really had a necklace made for herself, with the word "Reigne." She says there is only one necklace like this. She has an interesting gimmick for the promotion of her new album. 31 lucky people out there will find that the CD that they bought has a coupon inside, which can be exchanged for a 14-karat gold "Reigne" necklace. Unfortunately, none of the people at the presscon belonged to the lucky 31.

One of the topics brought up during the presscon was the rumor that Regine is leaving GMA-7 and is transferring to rival network ABS-CBN. Regine wanted to clear up the report because she was quite upset at being accused of being "*mukhang pera*". She says, "First of all, *kaya nga* show *business, di ba?* If there is a good opportunity for me to do something, whatever it may be, of course I'll grab the opportunity. *Trabaho iyon, di ba? Iyon lang naman iyon.*"

No GMA contract

She further explains that she does not have a contract with GMA. She says that she stays with "SOP," her Sunday noontime show on GMA, because of good faith. "One of the reasons why I do it is because I enjoy it. *Siyempre maganda na rin iyung* every month, *may natatanggap ako. Pero,* it's not even because of that. It's because I really enjoy doing it."

She admits that about four months ago, she met with ABS-CBN big bosses Freddie Garcia and Charo Santos-Concio, among others. They were offering her a show, most likely a variety show, with Martin Nievera as co-host. Regine felt that it would have been a really good show, "*Parang* Martin and Pops! Feeling *ko ang ganda no'n, kaya lang hindi ako* sure *kung kaya ko ng ganoon kalaking* exposure. *Kasi sa* 'SOP,' one spot *lang ako.*"

Misgivings

Even before they could get down to details, Regine told them of her misgivings. "I told them, if I accept the show you're offering me, that means I have to leave 'SOP.' And this is exactly what I said: 'I cannot leave 'SOP' right now because I really enjoy doing the show.'" Regine clarifies that her resignation from "SOP" was not imposed on her by ABS-CBN. "But that's another variety show so I have to leave. Career-wise, *kung tatanggapin ko iyon,* I have to sacrifice one show, *kasi pareho yung* concept."

She was also intimidated by the idea of having her own show. "Right now, I don't think *kaya ko nang magkaroon ng* show *na ganoon kalaki ang* exposure." she explains, even as everyone in the room expresses disagreement. At present, Regine is her own manager and so she is extra-careful about the decisions she makes. "Feeling *ko, hindi pa* time for me to have another show." Regine also fears getting overexposed.

Viva contracts

Aside from "SOP, she has a recording contract for six years and a movie contract for three pictures, both with Viva. But that doesn't mean that she is closing her doors to the possibility of such a show.

The Songbird revealed that GMA also offered her her own show, a sitcom. Again, Regine turned down the offer because it meant having to give up "SOP," which she is unwilling to do right now. She is so attached to her variety show, which she looks at as her "day off". "I go there, I make *chika,* I show off my clothes. *Iyon lang ang gusto ko doon,*" Regine laughs.

She also denies that she will leave "SOP" if her sister, Cacai will be asked to leave the show. Regine shares that Cacai has become so affected by the rumors that she asked Regine if she should just resign from the show before they fire her. But Regine told her, "*Bakit ka magpapa*-affect?" Regine talked to the people behind the show to get the real score and they assured her that there were no such plans.

In any case, had they asked Cacai to leave, Regine would not have used her star power as a bargaining chip to keep her sister on the show.

Intrigue

She also answered another charge being hurled against her – that she insists that movie outfits use her brother-in-law, composer Raul Mitra to do the score for their movies. Flat out, she says there is no such thing as a package deal. Regine says that all she did was give him his first break, which was to score her movie with Robin Padilla.

But she brushes off all these intrigues aside. She is now working on her first film with Richard Gomez, "Hanggang Ngayon," which is also the title of its theme song, composed by her favorite, Ogie Alcasid.

Since the movie will be shown in the first quarter of 2002, she expects to finish a second movie before the end of the year. Will she make a movie in time for next year's Metro film festival? "*Kaya ba ng powers kong mag*-filmfest?" she says, making a face.

VELASQUEZ. No truth to rumors that she's leaving "SOP."

AM/FM

Wish list for radio year 2002

By Rito P. Asilo

WE'VE listed down a number of things we think would make listening to the radio more exciting, engaging, worthwhile, instructive and fun for the coming year. Let us hope our radio stations are open to suggestions and innovations to make listening to radio a more pleasurable and memorable experience, not just a useless display of ambition and ego:

Impartiality

1.**For news anchors.** One of the basic tenets of journalism requires them to observe impartiality. Over the past years, the thin line that separates objectivity and personal conviction has been slowly blurred by notions of power and arrogance.

These days, a well-placed, highly-rated news anchor dishes out opinions even while inside his news booth, thus unfairly influencing public opinion. Listeners hear him huff and puff while editorializing on issues. Next thing you know, he's already running for a government seat!

2. If you can't be impartial, be gracious enough to respect other people's opinion. We have heard not a few of these anchors spew insults at people who didn't agree with their opinions. They can dish out harsh criticisms; but, if you criticize *them*, beware of verbal lashings!

We know of one popular host who lashed out at her critic after a not-so-favorable but constructive review of her program. She said, "*Isawsaw mo na lang ang medyas mo sa iyong kape at inumin mo!*" How mature!

Name-calling

3.Sedatives and tranquilizers for the *pikon*. Things can get so hot, discus-

WISH/ P. D3

'Lord of the Rings' runs rings around 'Harry Potter,' critics say

(From page D1)

LONDON—The early reviews are in and it looks like Frodo Hobbit will run rings around Harry Potter.

True magic

After the world premiere of the ambitious and much-hyped film epic "The Lord of the Rings," British critics proclaimed the boy wizard a mere pretender to the true magic of Frodo and friends.

"Forget Harry Potter, this has the true ring of greatness," the Daily Mail newspaper declared.

Its film critic Christopher Tookey, called the first film in director Peter Jackson's adaptation of J.R.R. Tolkien's trilogy "an awesome feat of imagination and daring."

"Critics who gave five-star ratings to Chris Columbus's competent but uninspired Harry Potter movie are going to have to find 10 if they are to do justice to "Fellowship of the Ring," he said.

"Harry Potter, be prepared to fall on your broomstick," said Daily Express show business corespondent Mark Jagasia.

Fantasy plot

The Sun film critic said the fantasy plot was brought to life by effects and sets that put Potter's Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry to shame.

"No matter how farfetched the plot and the characters, all skepticism is blown away by the sheer scale and realism of the sets, makeup and special effects," the paper said. "For all its wonderful sets, Potter looks, by comparison, like it was filmed in a garden shed."

Ever since their release dates were announced, the two films—each set in a fantasy world of magic, wizards and young heroes—have been expected to cross swords at the box office.

"Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone" opened last month to huge acclaim. Now critics say Harry Potter is child's play compared to "The Lord of the Rings," which may become a celluloid masterpiece.

Epic battles

Top accolades were saved for the epic battles and grandeur of the sets in which lush forests, lakes and mountains of New Zealand are transformed into Tolkien's mythical Middle Earth.

The three-hour film moves at a swift pace and children said they were spellbound for the duration.

"It is as amazing as I thought it would be, I like action and there is lots of it," said 14-year-old schoolboy turned critic Richard Earl in The Times. *Reuters*

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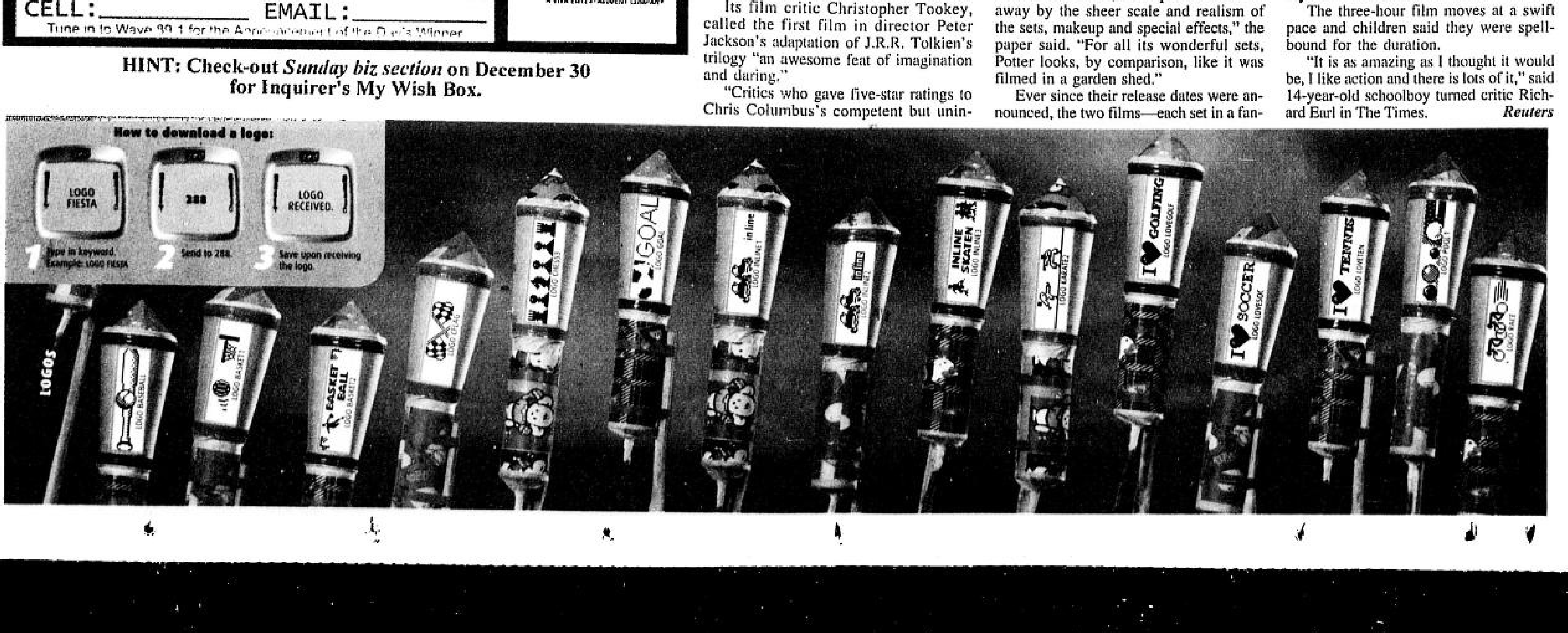
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Wish list for radio year 2002

(From page D2)

Stations should play more songs from the musical theater, especially those from original Filipino musicals

MITCH Valdes (left) with Katy dela Cruz in "Katy!" one of the popular Filipino musicals whose songs should be heard on radio programs.

sions can get so violent, that people resort to sophomoric name-calling once their arguments fail to get them the upper hand in debates. Medical management would certainly be welcome in these cases, rather than allow these discussions to degenerate into a verbal tussle between the intellectually challenged.

4.While it is true that radio mirrors what the common *tao* thinks, it should also help its listeners remedy their weaknesses. The simplest grammatical errors can be pointed out to listeners who insist on using the King's English. If they are bold enough to use it, they should also be brave enough to accept free tutorials from their favorite radio hosts—unless the hosts themselves don't know wrong from right!

Samples: "I would like to *grate* my friend from Bacolod..." (Ouch!); "I would like to share more *informations* with your listeners" (That's a *lot* of information, I suppose?); "I have rashes all over my body. *Kuya,* I'm *panic* already!" (Duh...)

Hodge-podge

5.We hope FM shows could have clearer formats, and not just bombard the airwaves with a lazy generalization of what their listeners can expect to hear.

Welcome examples of FM stations with a clear format are Rio's Ritmo Latino 106.7, for lovers of latin music; dwCT 88.3's jazz tracks, and dzFE's classical and Broadway programming.

6.If you enumerate phone numbers that your listeners can call, can you please make sure that they either work or are manned? We've spent a considerable amount of time testing the accessibility and availability of phone numbers that radio program hosts give out. In quite a number of instances, our efforts were in vain.

7.For music-oriented shows, we hope they can be more creative in presenting the songs they're playing on the air. Sometimes, we catch these supposedly smart DJs and realize that they know *nothing* about the artist who sang a particular song.

Creativity

If we wanted plain music on our radio, we'd buy cassette tapes and CDs instead. Please show a bit of creativity in the presentation of these (mostly pop) songs.

Example: Why the name "Alien Ant Farm"? How different are All-4-One's and Sugar Ray's "Someday," or Randy Crawford's and Nicole Kidman's "One Day I'll Fly Away"? Why didn't Nicole use her own voice in some of her supposed duets with Ewan McGregor in "Moulin Rouge"?

8.Can people stop texting while they're hosting their radio shows? It can be really irritating when these phones suddenly go off during an advice show's most dramatic moments, or suddenly blend with the flow of a song with their rhythmic beep-beeping as they accept or send out messages. What's even more irritating is when hosts actually *answer* their phones while on-air!

9.We know that commercial spots are the lifeline of most radio shows, but we hope that radio stations can regulate the number, or if that is not possible, the interval of these advertisements. It can get infuriating when a one-hour show gets to do only thirty minutes of program material just because half of its timeslot gets eaten up by spots.

Original Filipino music

10.We hope there would be more radio programs that could focus on original Filipino music. We have so much local talent and material that need a fair amount of exposure, but get much less than that. We also hope radio stations, whether on the AM or FM frequencies, would think up ways, maybe in the form of a show, to play more songs from the musical theater, especially those from original Filipino musicals.

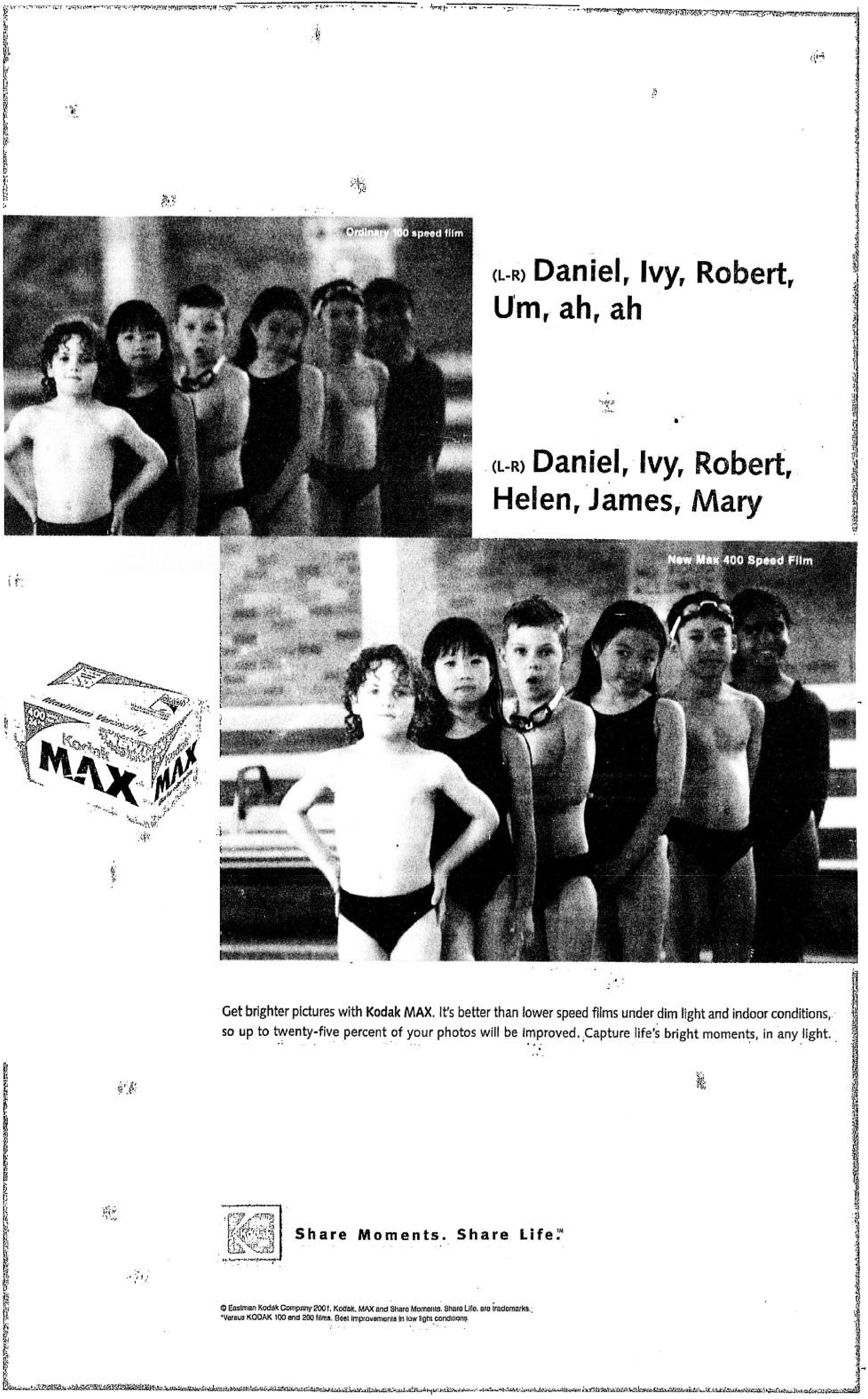
There are so many beautiful songs that we'd love to hear on the air.

From original Filipino musicals, there's Celeste Legaspi's "Minsan Ang Minahal ay Ako," Mitch Valdes and Marco Sison's "Awit Ko Para Sa 'Yo," from the soundtrack of "Katy!"; Rachel Alejandro's "Halik ng Kahapon," Eva Marie Poon's "Gising Na," from "Alikabok;" "Matimyas," from "Noli Me Tangere;" "Sanggol Kong Musmos," "Paano Itong Ikaw ay Nagdurusa" and "Sa 'Yong Mga Kamay," from "Magnificat;" "Calamba" and "Munting Pulo" from "Sino Ka Ba, Jose Rizal?;" "Cindy's Song" and "Pagkakataon," from "Nasaan si Hesus?;" "Doors," from "The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe;" "Magsimula Ka" and so many other great songs from Gines Tan's legendary musical. (Who could forget Leo Valdez' stratospheric recording of that musical's now-classic theme song?)

Show tunes

Show tunes from Broadway and West-end musicals: "Now and Then" (from "Nine"); "Anthem" ("Chess"); "Razzle Dazzle" ("Chicago"); "This Is the Moment" ("Jekyll and Hyde"); "Meadowlark" ("The Baker's Wife"); "I Still Believe" and "Last Night of the World" ("Miss Saigon"); "As If We Never Said Goodbye" (Sunset Boulevard);" "With You" ("Pippin"); "Empty Chairs and Empty Tables" ("Les Miserables") and many more.

If we can't get easy or affordable access to these songs on our own, radio should introduce them to us on the airwaves.



(L-R) Daniel, Ivy, Robert, Um, ah, ah

(L-R) Daniel, Ivy, Robert, Helen, James, Mary

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Catholic bishops express support for 'Bagong Buwan'

"BAGONG Buwan's" lead star Cesar Montano.

THE CATHOLIC Bishops' Conference of the Philippines has joined in the chorus of support for "Bagong Buwan," Star Cinema and Bahaghari Productions' entry to the ongoing Metro Manila Film Festival.

In a letter of endorsement dated Dec. 19, 2001, CBCP president Bishop Orlando B. Quevedo declared, "It is with great pleasure that I endorse the movie 'Bagong Buwan.' It is a movie about Muslims and Christians that surely challenges the consciousness of our Christian majority."

Perception

Bishop Quevedo continues: "History usually records the perceptions or interpretations of reality held by the dominant culture. This has been the case with centuries of tensions between Christians and Muslims in the Philippines. Generations belonging to each group grew up with their respective biases and prejudices. Such prejudices reach their peak in times of war, as in the 'all-out war' against the MILF and the Abu Sayyaf in the year 2000.

"'Bagong Buwan' portrays the conflicts in Mindanao from a Muslim perspective. The average Christian is usually not privy to this perspective. A Muslim views reality from a cultural, economic, political and religious angle quite different from that of the Christian.

Moreover, as among Christians, Muslims of different political persuasions would also have different perspectives.

"'Bagong Buwan' has chosen to depict these different Muslim views in order to project their common anxieties, joys and hopes.

"'Bagong Buwan,' indeed, challenges Christians to understand the perspective of Muslims on life, culture and religion, politics and economics, development, justice and peace. By so doing, the movie teaches us about the futility of war and violence."

As one of the first commercial Filipino films to focus on the Mindanao conflict, "Bagong Buwan" has already received an encouraging amount of sup-

CATHOLIC/p.D5

Exmundo and Coo in Manila outreach recitals

VIOLINIST Melissa Lopez-Exmundo and pianist Jonathan Arevalo-Coo.

UNIVERSITY of Toronto violin graduate, Melissa Lopez-Exmundo together with pianist Jonathan Arevalo-Coo will present free concerts next year, with a series of cultural exchanges for educators, college and high school students, the general public, and music lovers.

The program includes Beethoven's "Romance No 2," two pieces by National Artist Lucrecia Kasilag—"Intermezzo" and "Variations on Bahay Kubo," and Sonatas for Violin and Piano by Brahms ("No. 1 in G Major") and Grieg ("No. 3 in C minor").

The outreach recitals will start with a performance at the historic Paco Park on Jan. 4 at 6 p.m. This will be followed by a concert at Odette Alcantara's Heritage House for the Artists for the Environment on Jan. 5 at 6 p.m. The next two shows will be interaction-performances in Laguna and Cavite—Jan. 6 at 7 p.m. at the National Arts Center in Mt. Makiling and Jan. 7 at 5 p.m. at the Adventist University of the Philippines in Silang.

The violin-piano duo will then present lecture-recitals at the Philippine Women's University on Jan. 8 at 10 a.m. and on Jan. 9 at 2 p.m. at Sta. Isabel College.

The one-week NCR and Region IV tour will end with a performance on Fides Cuyugan Asensio's "A Little Night of Music" on GMA Channel 7 on Jan. 10. The Paco Park concert will be aired on PTV-4.

Music festivals

Exmundo participates in music festivals in Canada, Germany, Prague, the United States, and Vienna and studied with Gerard Kantarjain, concertmaster of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and Charles Castleman of the Eastman School of Music.

Coo studied with Rebecca Penneys of the Eastman School of Music, Roberta Rust of the Harid Conservatory, Thailand's National Artist Piyabhand Sanitwongse in Bangkok and was an outstanding artist awardee graduate at the Philippine High School for the Arts under Carmencita Arambulo.

Christmas corals

STREET SMART

Mandy Navasero

THE SPIRIT of Christmas lives in the hearts of men, women, and children—and underneath the sea, in the form of "Christmas corals" which emanate (and retreat into) solid coral rock formations. Christmas corals appear like Christmas, filled with the joy of living, only to retreat into a vivid memory of colors and beauty.

Gift

In this holiday season, if you feel like giving yourself and your loved ones the gift of one of the most breathtaking sights in the Philippine sea, you can check out Eureka Dive, Inc. to make it truly unforgettable.

Eureka Dive is located at Store 301 third floor of the Power Plant Mall at Rockwell Center. The shop itself is a unique sight, with walls lined with stones and fine sand, reminiscent of stone pebbles found in secluded beaches of distant islands.

Eureka Dive is the exclusive distributor of Parkway Scuba, a US manufacturer of high quality scuba diving equipment, known for its titanium-based wetsuits, high-performance regulators, and other products including the Tiburon BC. It is also the exclusive distributor of the well-known Cetacea dive accessories.

Eureka Dive also offers Scuba training in its state-of-the art classroom at the dive shop. Its confined water sessions are held at the beautiful and prestigious Rockwell Club. A weekend of diving under the able guidance of Eureka's seasoned dive instructors completes the course.

Dive tours

Eureka Dive also organizes dive tours throughout the Philippines and the best diving destinations worldwide. It is currently organizing a trip to the Galapagos, known for the presence of hammerhead sharks and other unusual sea and land creatures that fascinated Darwin, the Father of Evolution. Call 756-0170 or write eurekadive@eurekadive.com.

When interviewed, Josephine Jimenez, president and co-founder of Eureka Dive, and a Massachusetts Institute of Technology graduate, explained the origin of Eureka Dive. "I chose the name Eureka not only because it is catchy," she shared. "Actually, when Archimedes, the Greek scientist discovered the principle of buoyancy, he shouted 'Eureka' which means 'I've found it!' And diving is all about buoyancy control.

She added that with the beauty that lies in the Philippine seas, Eureka's vision and mission is to help boost Philippine tourism.

SOME of the many products used by divers.

JOSEPHINE Jimenez, president and co-founder of Eureka Dive.

ALVIN Nacu, vice president and Mike Oteyza, dive instructor.

Nobel Prize winners share insights on BBC

By Nestor U. Torre

THE TV set is called also the "boob tube"—and with good reason. From morning till night, it bombards us with generally silly stuff, momentarily diversion that is aimed at the least common denominator of viewers.

Dimwitted

It's small wonder that, as we watch some particularly senseless shows, we can feel our brains shrinking in the process. If we view enough stupid shows, we may end up as dimwitted as the people who make them—a terrifying thought!

Which is why we felt so grateful last Saturday night, when we watched the special show, "Nobel Minds," on the BBC Channel. During that memorable show, interviewer Nick Gowing had a field day talking to 12 Nobel Prize winners in the fields of Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Medicine, who very generously shared their insights on the attributes they had in common that they felt had made them outstanding enough to become Nobel laureates.

Mental gymnastics

Here, *finally*, was a TV program that did not insult the intelligence of its viewers. On the other hand, it challenged us to use every last iota of our grey matter to keep up with the dauntingly beautiful mental gymnastics performed by some of the most brilliant and creative people living in the world today.

As they exchanged views with each other, they brought viewers up to the most rarefied heights of human thought and discourse. But they were such masters of their respective fields that they did not have to hide behind confounding jargon and pseudo-scientific double-speak, as mediocre scientists often do.

In fact, they made most of their concepts rinsingly clear—and, even more remarkably, exciting. They made us realize that the new knowledge and discoveries they had pioneered in weren't just abstruse speculations about the shape of Einstein's navel, but important contributions that alleviate social problems and make the world a batter place to live in.

NOBEL/p.D7

Surviving 'Survivor'

By Mona Gonzalez

IF you're a lover of the TV show "Survivor," never, never work with John F.

John F. is a family friend with whom my husband and I collaborate on several publications-related side projects. The thing is, he has this knack for calling you up whenever "Survivor" is on. He will call you in the evenings on Tuesday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, just when the survivors are hurdling their latest challenge, whether on AXN or Studio 23. The audacity!

Finer details

He should know that I like watching "Survivor" on those days, even if it's the same episode being replayed for the entire week. He should know that I can watch the same episode over and over because I like to look for the finer details of what I had missed or overlooked the last time.

"Survivor" is a game show of a new genre—"Reality TV"—where you begin with 16 people living in the wilds (last time, it was the Australian outback; this time, it's an African jungle) with the barest trappings of modem civilization. Why, they don't even have soap, toothpaste, electricity, and definitely, no refrigerator.

They have the barest food items (by the middle of the required 41 days, they have usually lost a great deal of weight), and are tasked to do a wide range of feats (including drinking cow's blood mixed with milk, or eating live worms—ugh!).

"Could I please have the schedule of that show?" John asked me once when I complained. But there is something about "Survivor" and John.

Little screen

How do you explain the fact that I once caught "Survivor" (surprisingly) in the afternoon, and just at that time—bingo! he calls again? Maybe we are collaborating on too many projects together? My husband knows that Kat (our daughter) and I cannot be peeled off the little screen once "Survivor" is on.

Over dinner, my husband will listen patiently while Kat and I talk about how much we hate Lex (the man with tattoos up and down his arms and legs) because of the way he snaked out Clarence, or exclaim about how Lindsey is so irritating because she keeps freaking out and crying. We do like Tom however, the goatherd with the redneck accent and pure bead.

And we like Kelly with her "cheerleader personality." Kat thinks Ethan (the soccer player) is nerdy and admittedly, he did lose his looks after be began losing weight and the filth on his curly locks shone, making them resemble clumped, muddy ringlets on his gaunt face.

But Ethan is a dirty old lady's dream. A competitive young professional athlete with shoulder locks that Jim Morrison (don't say you don't know him) might have envied.

At one point, Kat and I transitioned (without my husband's realizing it) to the gay couple, then the young couple that always fights, and the bald best friends. "What?" husband said. "Who are they?"

We explained that we were now talking of "The Amazing Race," another reality TV show that is usually aired after "Survivor." My husband walked away, shaking his head.

Next person

There have been nights when I have gone to sleep thinking about "Survivor," wondering who would be the next person to be booted out, and who might eventually win. Then I would doze off, only to awaken in the middle of the night to realize that I had been dreaming of the show.

Perhaps I should assume on the attitude of my friend Nancy, whom I once wanted to talk to regarding the latest development of "Survivor." She simply told me, "I don't care." Neither does my other close friend Sockie, but her 15-year-old daughter and I can really get a conversation going about the show.

There is a distinct side to me that relishes entertainment that is fundamentally "*mababaw*" and brainless. For a while, for example, I couldn't let a night pass without watching Ricky Lake (at that time, her show was on everyday). There was something about its flotsam and jetsam that I found distinctly appealing. I would particularly love the times when the guests in the show would start messing each other up, oftentimes dragging the furniture along with them.

"Watch Ricky Lake" I once excitedly told my friend Sockie. "They're doing an episode on single parenthood." My friend, who has raised her daughter single-handedly with great aplomb, simply laughed.

Reputation

Let me try to salvage any reputation for intelligence that may still remain in the minds of the few who are willing to give me the benefit of the doubt by explaining why I enjoy shows like these so much.

First, I find it more appealing to dwell on the problems of "Survivor," than on my own problems on the job. As a freelance publicist, writer, and part-time magazine editor, I meet with a lot of different people for various reasons, and many times some of these people carry their own unique shade of stress with them. If I were to mull over the *real* things that irritate me, I would experience sheer frustration. Better to lull myself to a sound night's sleep dwelling on the possibilities of the "Survivors!"

Second, I enjoy watching their group dynamics. At one point, when Samburu was divided between the young and the old groups, the young ones were so obnoxious that it was amazing. To make matters worse, the young ones got the upper hand for a while, when two of the old ones were booted out. Oh, bow arrogant and mean they were while basking in their power. You watch human viciousness as an outsider with all of its malevolent intentions!

> I find it more appealing to dwell on the problems of 'Survivor,' than on my own problems on the job. If I were to mull over the *real* things that irritate me, I would experience sheer frustration

Underhanded

And some of them can be most underhanded in doing so—hitting you in such a way that you don't know whether it was intentional—or is it just you? But then, haven't we all wrestled with passive aggression? Haven't we all found ourselves in an unfair circumstance not of our making?

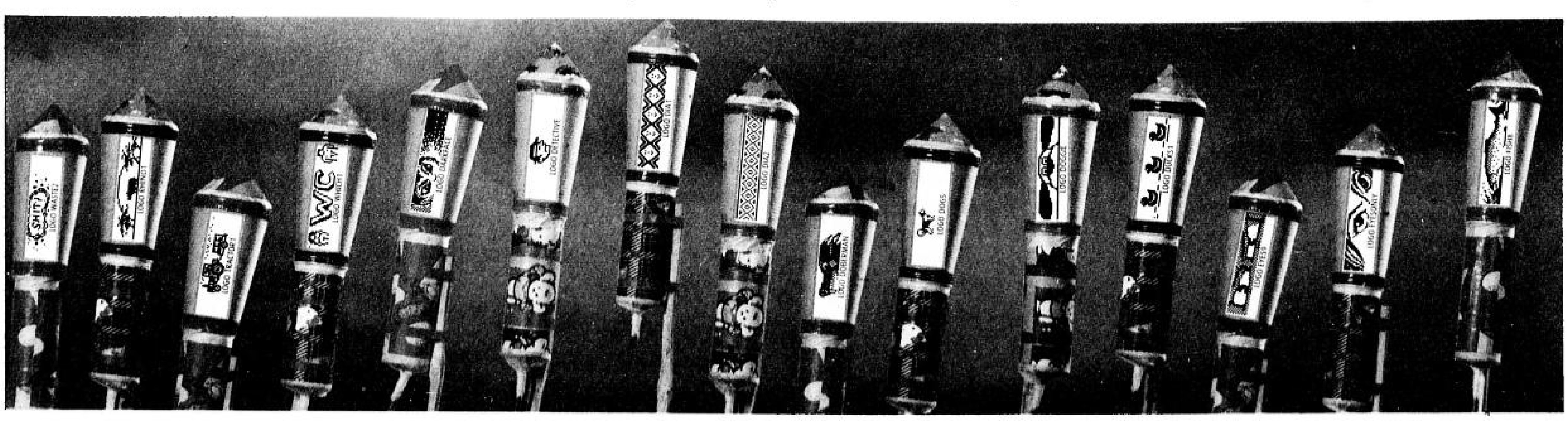
I also enjoy examining the personalities. For example, Lex appeared for the first few weeks to be one of the nice guys, and was most people's favorite. Then at the most opportune time (for him), be bared his fangs and showed what a sly, devious, mean person he could be when it was most convenient for him.

Who hasn't had the highest opinion of someone, only to later discover that he was, after all, unworthy? Lucky if the discovery was not made at your expense!

"Survivor" is the most popular "Reality TV" series. "Reality TV" actually involves seeing people respond to stressful situations and enabling you, the viewer, to play the legitimate "peeping tom" as they do so. But of course, there's fundamentally nothing real about "Reality TV." In the end, it' an editing job, with spontaneous texts "montaged" in between competitive events to present a story with the predictable storyline, including climax, denoument, *et al.*, per episode.

Television becomes fundamentally entertaining when there is enough truth in it to shed some light on your own experience; yet with enough fantasy in it to draw you away from the less appealing facets of your own realities. Some people may need to be more sufficiently tricked into the "truth" behind it than others. Or could some people simply be more voyeuristic?

I yam what I yam? Yikes!



ENTERTAINMENT BOOKSHELF

'The TV Guide Book of Lists' is a page-turner

BY NOELANI TORRE

WE are avid list makers and readers as well as insatiable television addicts, so it was only natural that we devoured "The TV Guide Book of Lists." From the editors of TV Guide, Amy Paulsen and Annabel Vered, this book is filled with "revealing facts, fascinating fads, and strange phenomena from 50 years of television."

Familiar stuff

It's about American television, of course, so there were a few names and titles that we were unfamiliar with, but there was enough familiar stuff to keep us turning the pages.

Some people might think collecting TV trivia is silly and uninteresting, but TV Guide's editors don't agree. "More than anyone," they say in their introduction, "we appreciate television's rich history of entertainment and information. At the same time, we revel in TV trivia and pride ourselves on our prolific knowledge of outrageous facts and obscure phenomena." We detect irreverence here, which is apparent throughout the book and makes it a fun read.

The book's 20 chapter headings give readers an idea of its scope, as it catalogues "TV Trends and Star Style," "Love and Romance," "Aliens Among Us," "The 50 Greatest TV Stars of All Time," and many more.

Breast implants

We must admit that it might not really be useful to know who the "16 Stars Who Admit They Had Plastic Surgery" are, but it nevertheless laid to rest one of our insecurities when we read that Pamela Anderson Lee has had breast implants. The other "noble few who are real enough to admit that they're plastic" include Cher (nose job, breast enlargement, teeth), Joan Rivers (facelift, eyes done, liposuction on thighs, nose job, tummy tuck) and Roseanne (breast reduction, nose job, facelift, tummy tuck). Whew! It's definitely difficult to be gorgeous these days!

In Chapter Two, "Career Moves," we discovered an interesting list of "15 Former Professions That Turned Out to Be Dead Ends." Good thing Denzel Washington decided to quit coffin polishing and take up acting instead! He would've been utterly wasted on all those corpses.

Or try imagining Tom Hanks as a bellboy, Danny DeVito as a hairdresser and Jay Leno as a mechanic. We had a lot of laughs over that!

More: Bruce Willis used to be a bartender, John Goodman a bouncer, Lorenzo Lamas a fry cook, Carol Burnett a hatcheck girl, and Groucho Marx a wig cleaner! As the editors themselves wryly observe, "Luckily, they decided to quit their day jobs and give acting a chance!"

In the same chapter, we also find out which stars have stripped for Playboy, and among these "17 Sirens" are Pamela Anderson Lee, Joan Collins, Shannen Doherty, Linda Evans, Farrah Fawcett and Suzanne Somers. Well, if you've got it, flaunt it, right?

Acceptance speeches

More seriously, in "And the Winners Are…" (Chapter Five) is a list of "14 Memorable Oscar Night Acceptance Speeches" that are funny as well as touching.

Here's Dustin Hoffman's quip after winning Best Actor for "Kramer vs. Kramer" in 1979: "I'd like to thank my parents for not practicing birth control."

And in a more somber vein, Oliver Stone said, "I think through this award you're really acknowledging that for the first time you really understand what happened over there (in Vietnam). And I think what you're saying is that it should never in our lifetime happen again." That was in 1986, when he had won Best Director and Best Picture for "Platoon."

Chapter Seven, "Scandals," is full of juicy stuff from "12 Actors Who Have Been Arrested" to "Seven Former Child Stars Who Were Very, Very Naughty." The stars' dirty tricks are revealed here.

CHER. Expert at self-enhancement through plastic surgery.

And, in the "10 Infamous TV Star Faux Pas" list, we relive their "moments of extreme tackiness."

Heading the list is Ted Danson who "wore blackface at a Friars Club roast of his then-girlfriend Whoopi Goldberg in 1993." Really bad taste, that—no wonder they broke up!

Baseball game

Roseanne is also here, she whose crotch-grabbing and spitting while the US national anthem was playing at a baseball game back in 1990 is still remembered. She's two places up from Howard Stern who "arrived at the 1992 MTV Video Music Awards in full Fartman regalia, baring his not-quite-firm buns for all the world to see." Mel Gibson, he obviously is not.

Speaking of Mel, "at the 1996 MTV Video Music Awards, cohost Janeane Garofalo approached (him) for a quick interview, then asked him, 'Do you think I look fat in this dress?' Mel was not amused." If we had the chance to ask Mel Gibson something, that would definitely not be it!

Let's skip several chapters to "What's in a Name?," Chapter 14. Here, in "53 Stars Who Changed Their Names," we discover several gems. Who would've guessed that Walter Matthau was a Walter Matuschanskayasky? Or that plain Patsy Ann McClenny is actually Morgan Fairchild? Jane Seymour was once Joyce Penelope Frankenberg and Tadewurz Wladyzui Konopka is Ted Knight! Well, we can understand why they went for a change! Whom would you rather watch, Doris Day or Doris von Kappelhoff?

Sentimental

In the last chapter, "The 100 Most Memorable Moments in TV History," the tone is definitely not irreverent and is more sentimental and serious. Here they include historic real-life events as well as those from favorite TV shows.

Number 96 in the list is the "Police Brutality in Birmingham" on May 3, 1963 that "awakened the nation" and "added considerable impetus to the civil rights movement."

In contrast, number 84 is "The Alexis and Krystle Catfight on 'Dynasty,'" where Joan Collins and Linda Evans "plunge into the pond and start whaling at each other."

Third is "John-John's Salute" that broke hearts not just in America but all over the world on Nov. 25, 1963.

Topping everything else is "that unforgettable and triumphant moment" on July 20, 1969 when "Armstrong Walk(ed) on the Moon." (Now it would probably be the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.)

"The TV Guide Book of Lists" is a very enjoyable read and makes true its boast that it "will have you watching your shows and their stars in a whole new way." Its very existence, as a matter of fact, proves how vital and wide-reaching a medium television has been for the past 50 years.

Catholic bishops . . .

(From page D4)

port from many sectors. Earlier, the non-government organization Tabang Mindanaw gave "Bagong Buwan" its support for its even-handed depiction of the ordeal the residents of the war-torn areas of Mindanao undergo.

In another noteworthy development, after garnering praise from educators, opinion-makers, government officials and nongovernment organizations, "Bagong Buwan" distinguished itself from the rest of the Metro Manila Film Festival entries after being awarded an "A" rating by the Film Ratings Board.

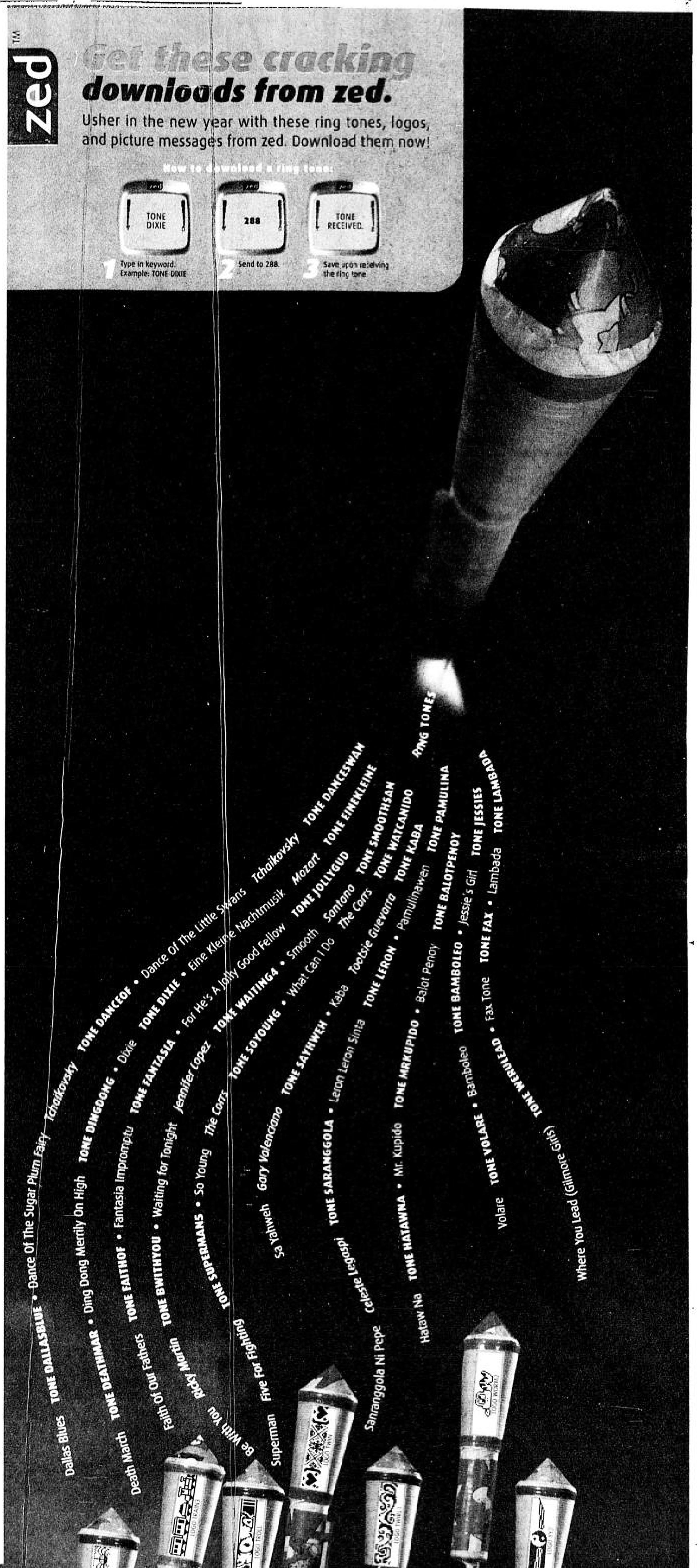
"Bagong Buwan" was the only film to get an A rating in this year's filmfest slate. This means that "Bagong Buwan" was already the most-lauded film in the field of seven MMFF entries even before the festival began.

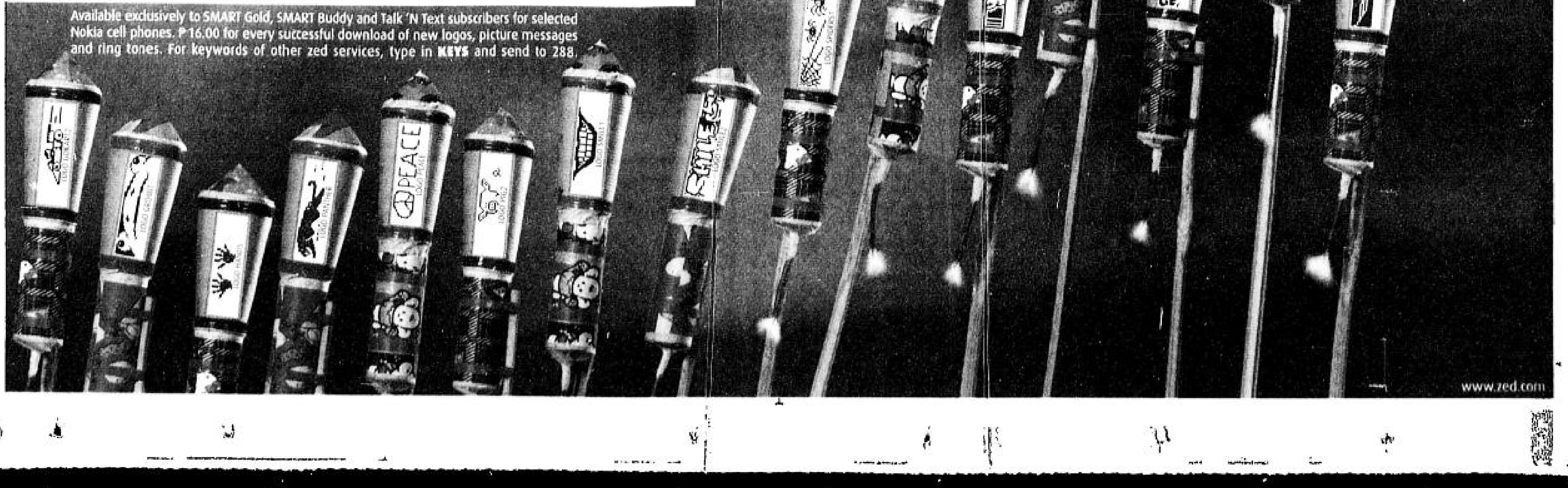
Award-winning team

"Bagong Buwan, which reunites the award-winning team of director Marilou Diaz-Abaya and actor Cesar Montano, had already gathered an encouraging mass of grassroots support even before its first special screening at the ABS-CBN Studio 1 theater.

Opinion-makers like Randy David, Behn Cervantes, former Bangko Sentral governor Jose Cuisia, Presidential Adviser for the Peace Process Sec. Eduardo Ermita, businessman Don Jaime Zobel de Ayala, social activist and columnist Maribel Ongpin, AFP spokesperson Brig. Gen. Edilberto Adan and film director Laurice Guillen were only a few of the influential celebrities who praised the film after catching its first preview, which was hosted by ABS-CBN.

"Bagong Buwan" also stars Amy Austria, Jericho Rosales, Caridad Sanchez, Carlo Aquino, Jhong Hilario, Jiro Manio, Ronnie Lazaro and Jodi Santamaria.





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TONE RECEIVED.
RING TONES
Dallas Blues TONE DALLASBLUE • Dance Of The Sugar Plum Fairy Tchaikovsky TONE DANCEOF • Dance Of The Little Swans Tchaikovsky TONE DANCESWAN
Death March TONE DEATHMAR • Ding Dong Merrily On High TONE DINGDONG • Dixie TONE DIXIE • Eine Kleine Nachtmusik Mozart TONE EINEKLEINE
Faith Of Our Fathers TONE FAITHOF • Fantasia Impromptu TONE FANTASIA • For He's A Jolly Good Fellow TONE JOLLYGUD
Be With You Ricky Martin TONE BWITHYOU • Waiting for Tonight Jennifer Lopez TONE WAITING4 • Smooth Santana TONE SMOOTHSAN
Superman Five For Fighting TONE SUPERMANS • So Young The Corrs TONE SOYOUNG • What Can I Do The Corrs TONE WATCANIDO
Sa Yahweh Gary Valenciano TONE SAYHWEH • Kaba Tootsie Guevarra TONE KABA
Sananggola Ni Pepe Celeste Legaspi TONE SARANGGOLA • Leron Leron Sinta TONE LERON • Pamulinawen TONE PAMULINA
Hataw Na TONE HATAWNA • Mr. Kupido TONE MRKUPIDO • Balot Penoy TONE BALOTPENOY
Volare TONE VOLARE • Bamboleo TONE BAMBOLEO • Jessie's Girl TONE JESSIES
Where You Lead (Gilmore Girls) TONE WHEULEAD • Fax Tone TONE FAX • Lambada TONE LAMBADA
Available exclusively to SMART Gold, SMART Buddy and Talk 'N Text subscribers for selected Nokia cell phones. P16.00 for every successful download of new logos, picture messages and ring tones. For keywords of other zed services, type in KEYS and send to 288.
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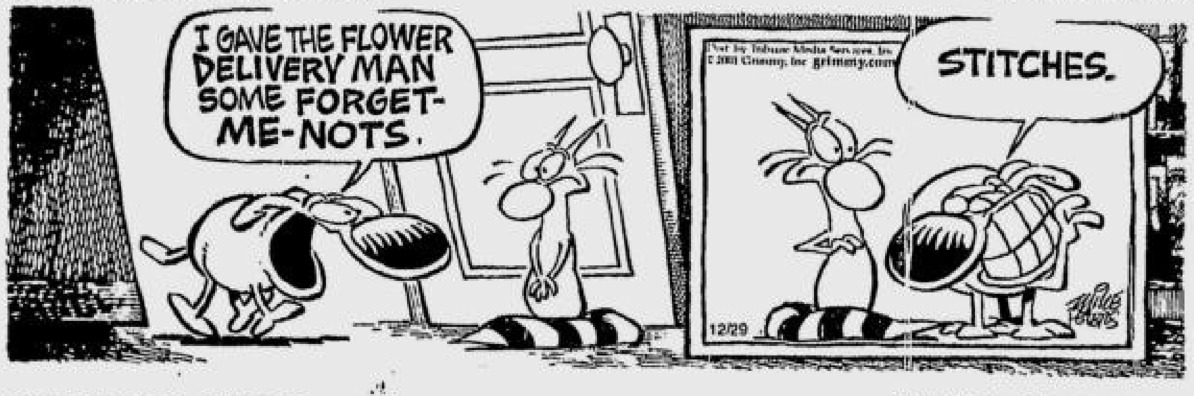
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

ComicRelief

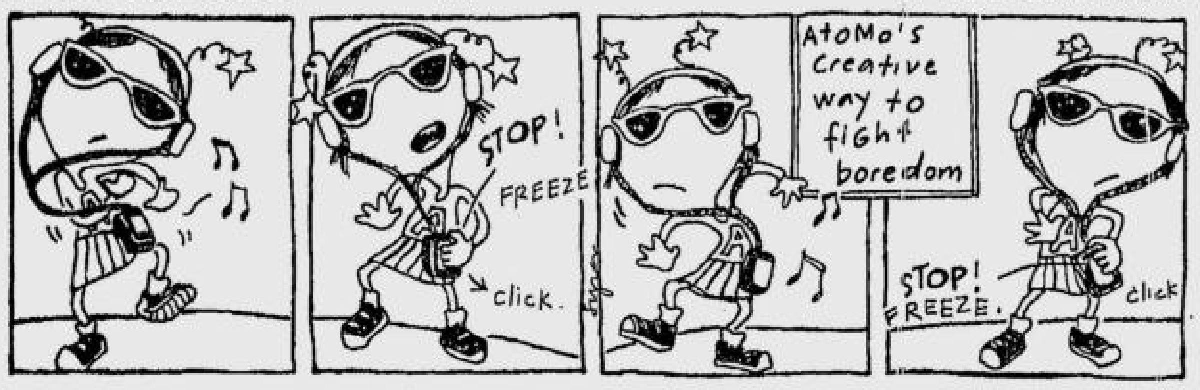
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

BY MIKE PETERS


I GAVE THE FLOWER DELIVERY MAN SOME FORGET-ME-NOTS.
STITCHES.
Dist by Tribune Media Services, Inc. ©2001 Grimmy, Inc grimmy.com
12/29

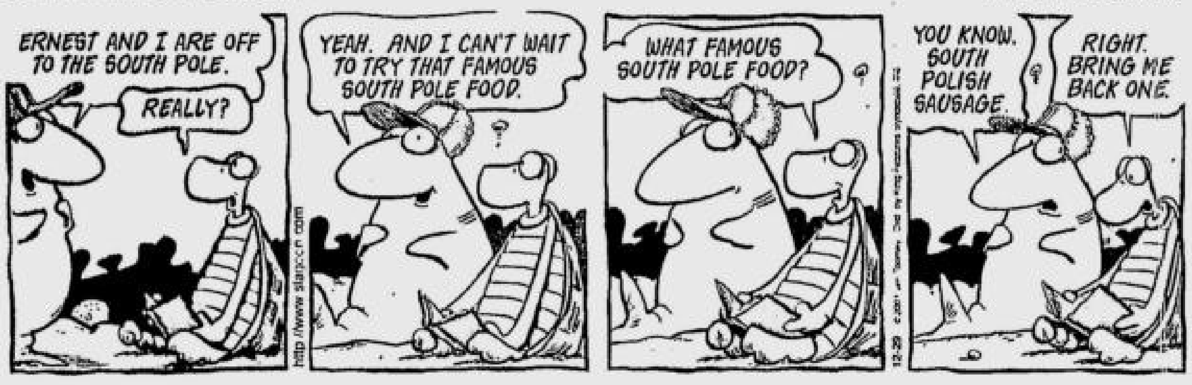
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


STOP!
FREEZE
click.
AtoMo's Creative way to fight boredom
STOP! FREEZE.
click

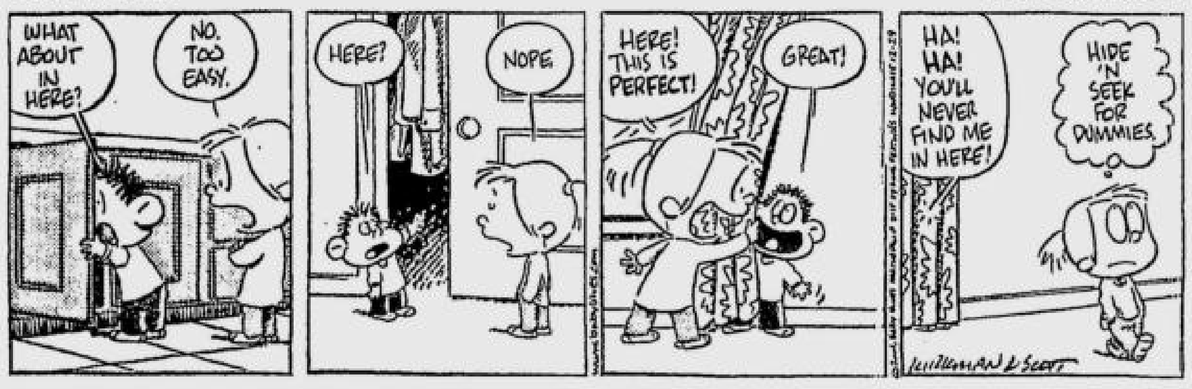
SHERMAN'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY


ERNEST AND I ARE OFF TO THE SOUTH POLE.
REALLY?
YEAH. AND I CAN'T WAIT TO TRY THAT FAMOUS SOUTH POLE FOOD.
WHAT FAMOUS SOUTH POLE FOOD?
YOU KNOW. SOUTH POLISH SAUSAGE.
RIGHT. BRING ME BACK ONE.
http://www.slagoon.com
12-29

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


WHAT ABOUT IN HERE?
NO. TOO EASY.
HERE?
NOPE.
HERE! THIS IS PERFECT!
GREAT!
HA! HA! YOU'LL NEVER FIND ME IN HERE!
HIDE 'N SEEK FOR DUMMIES.
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Mary Tyler Moore, Ted Danson, Jon Voight, Jude Law

Happy Birthday: You must maneuver yourself into a position that will allow you to promote yourself and your goals. Your ability to express yourself with enthusiasm will inspire others. You will not have a lot of spare time and that may create problems in your personal life. Your numbers are 5, 19, 23, 25, 27, 32

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Now is the time to eliminate what you don't like without getting sentimental. Sitting and complaining will only lead to trouble with loved ones.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Help an older relative who won't ask for help but who could use a hand. Your good deed will be appreciated and rewarded.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): You've probably done a little bit more spending than you intended this year, but don't fret—just enjoy preparing for the upcoming events.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) Don't get involved in gossip. Have your dearest friends over and your cozy atmosphere will put everyone at ease.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): It's time to put your feet up and enjoy the company of someone you love. Don't hold back; this is a great time to say exactly how you feel.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): This will not be the best day to interact with others. Someone you least expect will be dishonest with you. Don't spend time with indulgent individuals.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Make plans to get out and do your own thing. Your good nature will allow you to get away with things that others would never be able to do.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): You will be able to make plans to take a winter vacation. Looking through travel magazines will get you in the mood and help you choose where it is that you want to go.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Moneymaking opportunities may be present, but it is unlikely that you will be able to participate. If you do, you may find yourself short of cash.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): You'll be on the go today. Don't expect your family to be happy with the lack of time you spend at home. You will want to make amends before the end of the year.

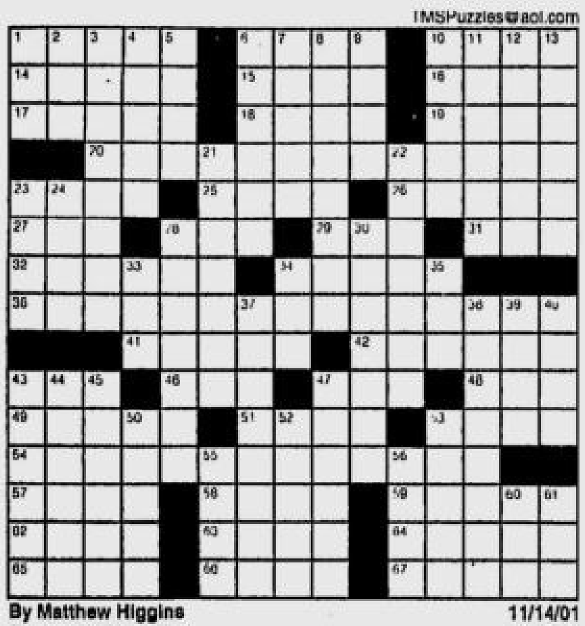
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Don't get involved in secret matters. You will find it difficult to keep things to yourself. You may want to take time out and spend the day doing your own thing.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Start doing the things you've put on hold until the New Year. You will feel good about yourself and about your future if you make positive progress.

Birthday Baby: You are a spur-of-the-moment type of individual. You set your sights on something and you go for it. You are determined, restless and always thinking about the possibilities.

DAILY CROSSWORD

IMSPuzzles@aol.com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By Matthew Higgins
Concord, NH

11/14/01

ACROSS
1 Papas' partners
6 Batter Bogge
10 Stumble
14 Popeye's girl
15 Stravinsky or Sikorsky
16 Nevada city
17 Borden's spokescow
18 Papal name
19 Otherwise
20 Irish-born "Waiting for Godot" playwright
23 In due time
25 Waste allowance
26 Daisylike flower
27 Singer Reed
28 "__ Now or Never"
29 Coming next: abbr.
31 Secret agent
32 Tranquil
34 Coastal birds
36 Irish-born "The Vicar of Wakefield" author
41 Bring to bear
42 Intended route
43 Coll. sports grp.
46 Nabokov novel
47 Samovar
48 Operated
49 Mont of the Alps
51 Flintstones' pet
53 Hoity-toityness
54 Irish-born "Gulliver's Travels" author
57 Module
58 One woodwind
59 Flies high
62 Tenant's payment
63 Forearm bone
64 Mongrels
65 Tense
66 Lively dance
67 Wintry weather forecast

DOWN
1 A Stooge
2 Everything
3 Show Me State
4 For the birds?
5 Appear
6 Windshield adjuncts
7 Nimble
8 Uncertain
9 Scottish Gaelic
10 Difficult journeys
11 Finds a new tenant for a flat
12 Foot part
13 Verse
21 Said
22 Visits briefly
23 Too
24 Coward of theater
28 Not strictly accurate
30 Bourbon brand
33 Actress Arden
34 Acquired
35 Dallas sch.
37 Capable of being rated
38 Annoy
39 Russian emperor
40 Farm layers
43 Renounce
44 Duplicated genetically
45 Singapore punishment
47 Open
50 Cooper's Bumppo
52 As a unit
53 Run __ of the law
55 Day division
56 Doctrines
60 Hwy. with a number
61 Fast filer's letters

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

T	A	X	E	S		A	M	P	S		S	I	R	E
H	U	R	O	N		L	E	A	N		T	R	O	Y
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S	E	C	R	E	T	A	G	E	N	T		F	L	Y
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S	S	T		H	I	D	E	A	N	D	S	E	E	K
			C	A	V	E			E	A	T	E	R	S
O	M	E	A	R	A		P	H	O	N	O			
M	I	S	S	I	N	G	L	I	N	K		P	O	I
A	S	S	T		H	E	A	T		E	G	Y	P	T
H	E	E	L		O	N	T	O		S	E	L	E	S
A	R	N	E		E	T	O	N		T	E	E	N	Y

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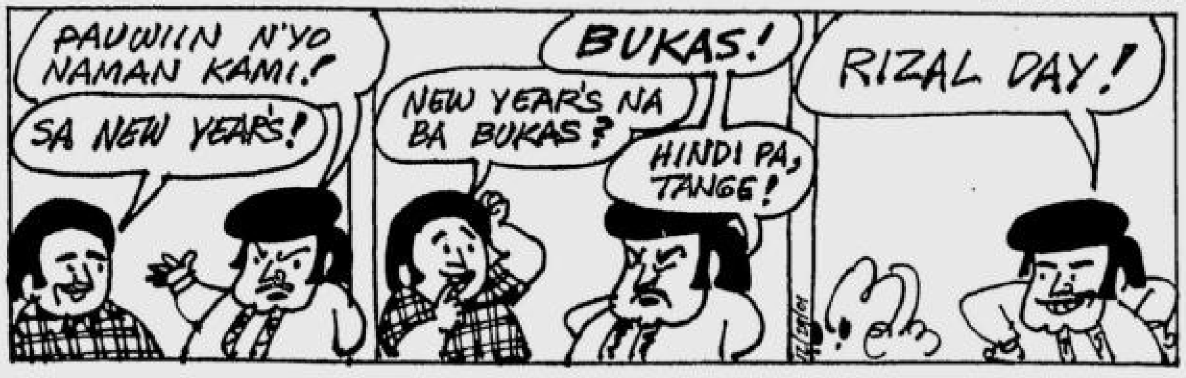
11/14/01

ANSWER ON MONDAY

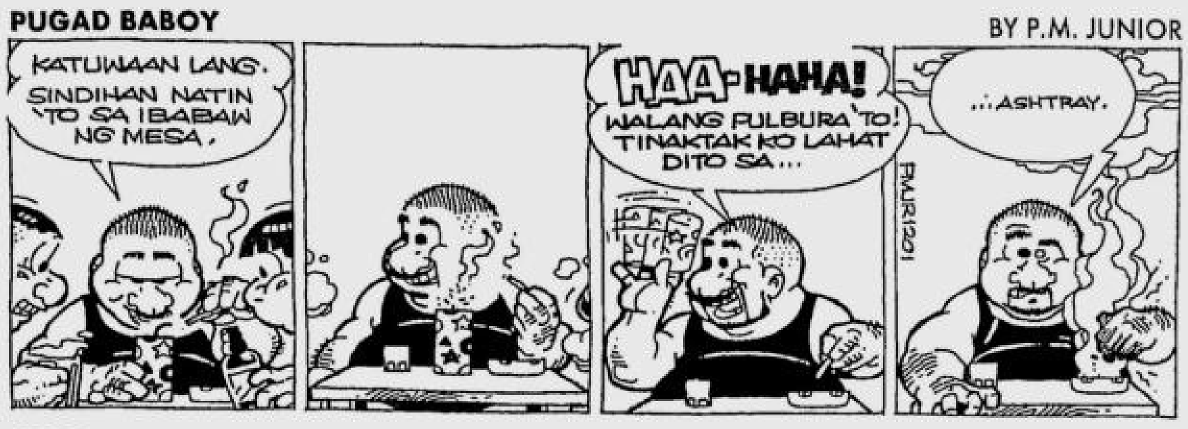
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


PAUWIIN N'YO NAMAN KAMI!
SA NEW YEAR'S!
NEW YEAR'S NA BA BUKAS?
BUKAS!
HINDI PA, TANGE!
RIZAL DAY!

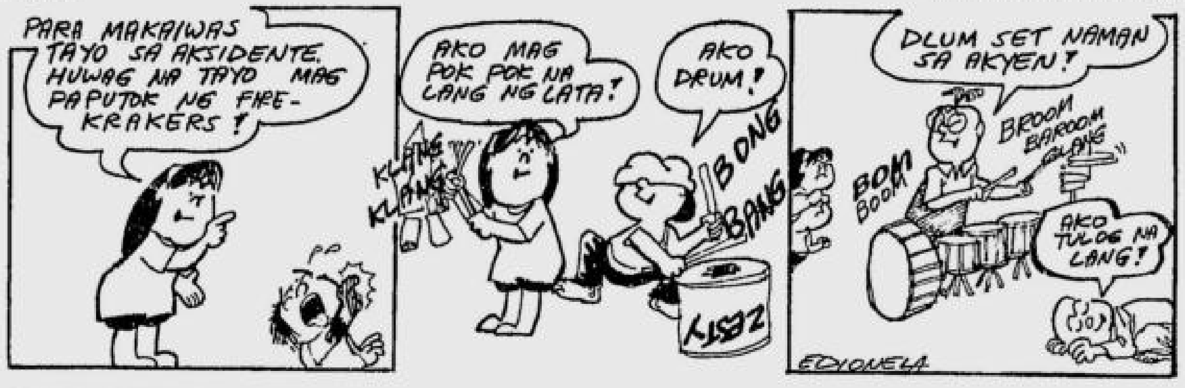
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


KATUWAAN LANG. SINDIHAN NATIN 'TO SA IBABAW NG MESA.
HAA-HAHA!
WALANG PULBURA 'TO! TINAKTAK KO LAHAT DITO SA...
PMJR1201
...ASHTRAY.

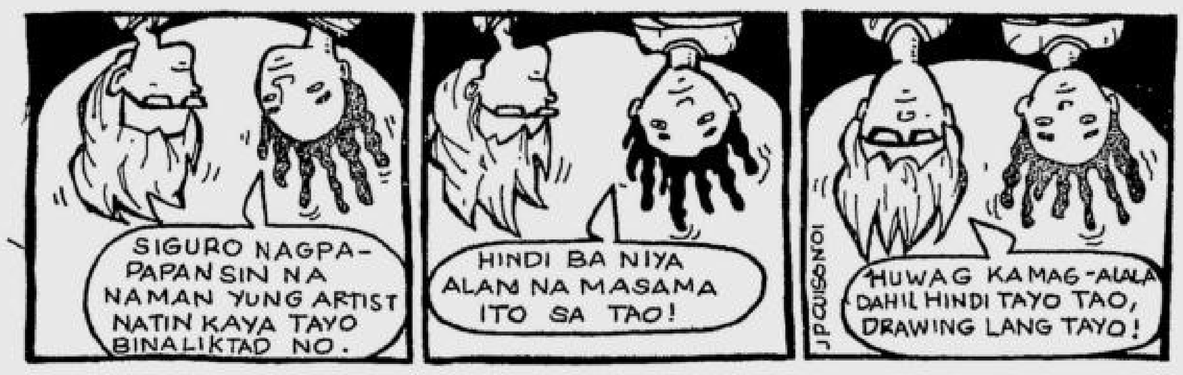
SIMO

BY EDGAR DIONELA


PARA MAKAIWAS TAYO SA AKSIDENTE. HUWAG NA TAYO MAG PAPUTOK NG FIRE-KRAKERS!
AKO MAG POK POK NA LANG NG LATA!
AKO DRUM!
KLANG KLANG
BONG BANG
ZESTY
DLUM SET NAMAN SA AKYEN!
BOM BOOM
BROOM BAROOM GLANG
AKO TULOG NA LANG!
EDIONELA

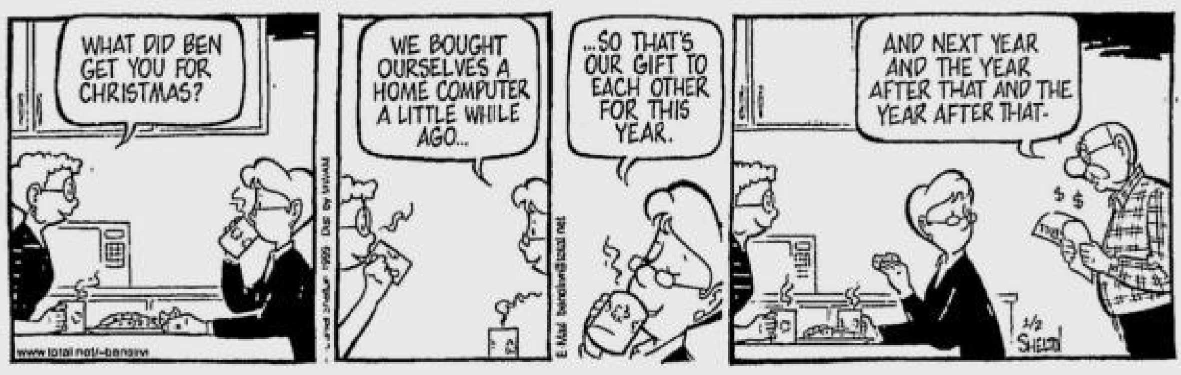
GARAPATA BLOOD

BY JOHN PAUL CUISON


SIGURO NAGPA-PAPANSIN NA NAMAN YUNG ARTIST NATIN KAYA TAYO BINALIKTAD NO.
HINDI BA NIYA ALAM NA MASAMA ITO SA TAO!
JPCUISON01
HUWAG KAMAG-ALALA DAHIL HINDI TAYO TAO, DRAWING LANG TAYO!

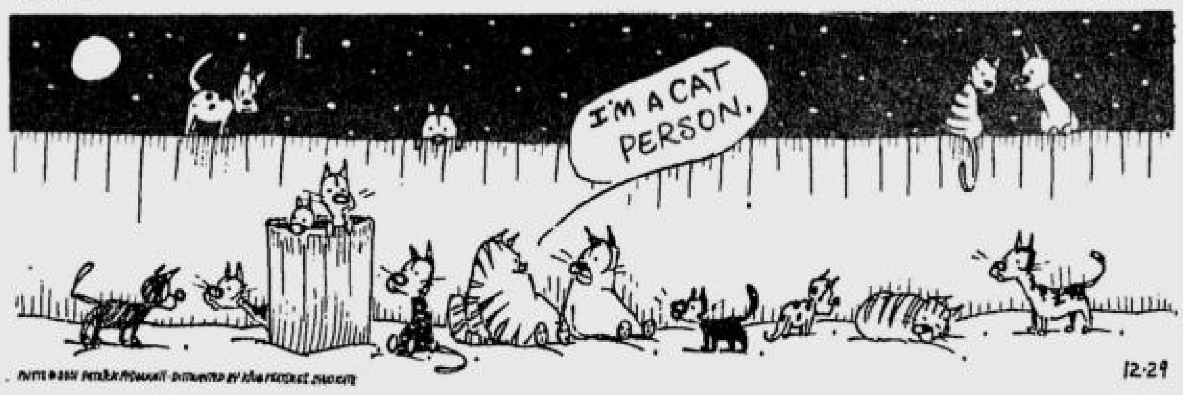
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


WHAT DID BEN GET YOU FOR CHRISTMAS?
WE BOUGHT OURSELVES A HOME COMPUTER A LITTLE WHILE AGO...
...SO THAT'S OUR GIFT TO EACH OTHER FOR THIS YEAR.
AND NEXT YEAR AND THE YEAR AFTER THAT AND THE YEAR AFTER THAT-
$ $
SHELTON

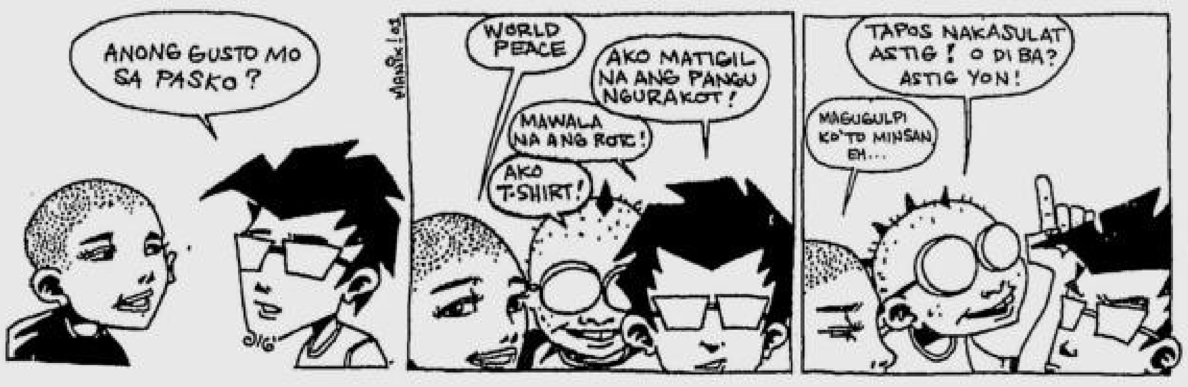
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


I'M A CAT PERSON.
12-29

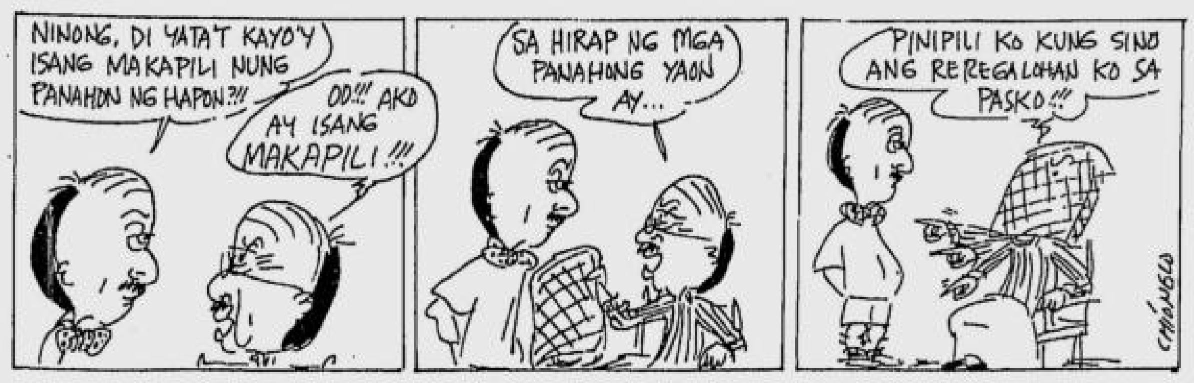
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


ANONG GUSTO MO SA PASKO?
WORLD PEACE
AKO MATIGIL NA ANG PANGU NGURAKOT!
MAWALA NA ANG ROTC!
AKO T-SHIRT!
TAPOS NAKASULAT ASTIG! O DI BA? ASTIG YON!
MAGUGULPI KO 'TO MINSAN EH...

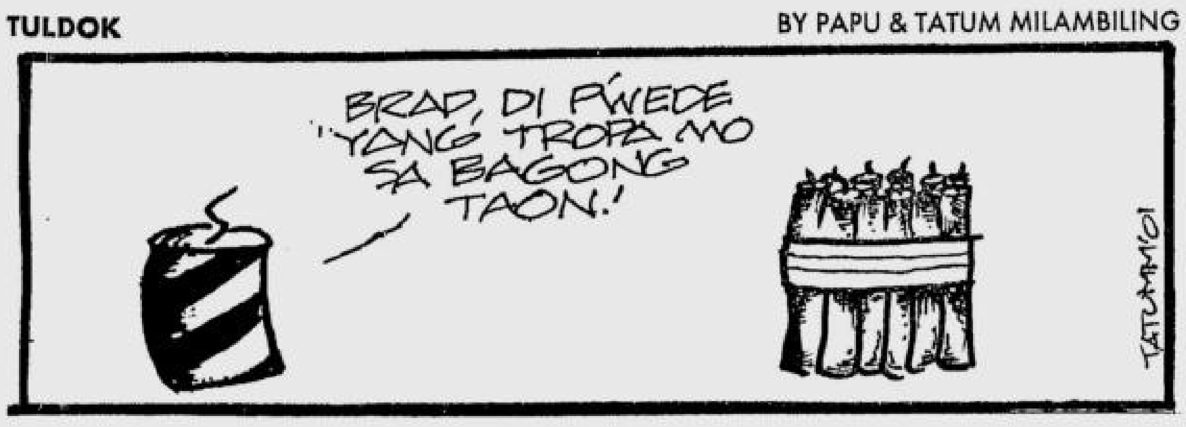
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


NINONG, DI YATA'T KAYO'Y ISANG MAKAPILI NUNG PANAHON NG HAPON?!!
OO!!! AKO AY ISANG MAKAPILI!!!
SA HIRAP NG MGA PANAHONG YAON AY...
PINIPILI KO KUNG SINO ANG REREGALOHAN KO SA PASKO!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU & TATUM MILAMBILING


BRAD, DI PWEDE 'YANG TROPA MO SA BAGONG TAON!
TATUM'01

Ogie Alcasid says he became a songwriter by accident

By Edmund L. Sicam

OGIE Alcasid has always been known as a singer. Then people discovered that he had a penchant for making people laugh and he became a comedian as well. Now, he has a "new" talent that has been discovered by the public. He is now becoming a much sought after composer, which comes as something of a surprise to him!

Contests

"*Kasi*, singer *talaga ako e*. I am just a songwriter by accident," Ogie says, during the launch of his new album, "A Better Man." When he was really young, he and two of his cousins used to have songwriting contests. "*Sabihin ko*, 'OK, *sulat tayo ng mga kanta . . . ako rin ang* judge.' *Siyempre, ako lagi nananalo*!" he recalls, laughing. At the age of 10, he wrote a song that he was very proud of. It's title was "Listen to My World."

Ogie eagerly shared his first composition with the group. "*Sabi ko*, wow, how profound! *Eto iyung* lyrics, *naaalala ko pa*: 'Listen to my world of reality, mentality,' (*wala . . . basta lang mag*-rhyme!)/ Listen to my world of my creation / Is it true that we live in a world of hopes and not like my world of love?—Feeling *ko noon, ang galing-galing ko*!'

He was so proud of his composition then that he let his father listen to it. He recalls that everyone who heard the song laughed. "But my dad, for some strange reason said, '*Kantahin mo iyung ginawa mo* . . . yung mentality . . . *yung sira ulo*.' *In*-encourage *niya ako*. I know he thought it was a ridiculous song, *pero*, I think that was when I really started writing songs."

No formula

Ogie says he doesn't really have a ritual or formula in coming up with his songs. "*Wala akong proseso* because I don't have the benefit of time." The songwriter shares that he waits for his wife and daughter to fall asleep. So usually at about 3 a.m., he sits at his piano and writes his songs. Ogie reveals that he usually comes up with the tune first, and works on the lyrics later. Sometimes, a tune comes to him when he's on the road.

He shares that his upcoming duet with Regine, "Hanggang Ngayon," suddenly came to him when he was out one day. "*Pumasok lang e . . . 'Hanggang ngayon, ikaw pa rin . . .' Alam mo*, after one hour, *hindi ko na siya maaalala*!" he relates. "*Tulad minsan, sabihin ko sa asawa ko*, 'Honey, please remember this. *E, di naman kumakanta ang asawa ko*, so *malay ba niya*!"

So his wife, Michelle bought him a tape recorder so he could put his tunes on tape. However, he has also found a phone that can record his song. "So I get the phone, *kinakantahan ko na. Pag-uwi ko, babalikan ko iyon. Mas* handy *ito kasi iyung* phone, *lagi mong dala*." He reveals that inspiration sometimes comes to him when he is in the bathroom.

Nice feeling

When he started writing songs, he loved the feeling. "I liked the idea, I felt like I was an artist. *Parang* you're working on a canvas, painting *ka ng* painting. *Pangit o maganda, ituloy mo*. Now I think I'm becoming a songwriter for hire and it's increasingly difficult for me."

ALCASID. Has the ability to detach his spirit from his soul.

He acts out an imaginary phone conversation: "Hello? *Gawa mo naman akong kanta*." He says in a girl's voice. "*O, anong kuwento mo? Gusto mo ganon, gusto mo iniwan ka*? OK . . ." he says in an extremely bored voice. "*Nagiging ganoon*," complains the artist. But he still comes up with inspired songs that sound so genuine.

Ogie discloses that a spiritual person told him that he has the ability to detach his spirit from his soul (or something like that). Because of this, he is able to feel different things. "For it to be genuine *kasi*, you have to feel the emotion, *di ba*? How can I feel something like that when that's a story about having someone already and regretting that you (met someone only now). So, *ginagawa ko, nag-iisip ako ng pelikula*. 'Ikaw Pa Rin Pala' . . . *Inisip ko, si* John *at si* Janice *kaya, magkabalikan? Anong sasabihin nila sa isa't isa?*" he says.

Heartfelt

"I think of a title, I think of situations, and I guess the ones that really sell are the ones that are bittersweet. There has to be a certain quality I'm looking for, something that's heartfelt, something that when you listen to it, *may kumikirot*. And I think those are the songs that have a lasting quality, like 'Bakit Ngayon Ka Lang,' 'Kailangan Ko'y Ikaw,' 'Ikaw Lamang.'"

One of his biggest hits was the theme song of the Regine Velasquez-Robin Padilla movie with the same title, "Kailangan Ko'y Ikaw." Ogie shared a funny anecdote behind the song. Regine approached Ogie and asked him to write a song for her movie. Out of the blue, Ogie came up with "Kailangan Ko'y Ikaw." "OK ba iyon?" he asked her. Regine liked it: "*Sige*! OK *iyon*!" Ogie says he pictured it as merely a love theme, "'*Yung naghahabulan, mga* happy moments."

Own voice

So when he came up with the song, (which he admits took him only five mintues to write), he recorded the song using his own voice. "*Noong ni*-record ko, *di ko namalayan, boses ng babae* (*ang ginamit ko*)! *Kasi iniisip ko, si* Regine *e*! *So noong binigay ko iyung* demo, *tawa ng tawa si* Regine, *Nung narinig ng director*, '*Bakit ganyan ang kantang iyan*?' *Sabi ni* Regine, '*Hindi, gaganda iyan pag kinanta ko na*!"

But Ogie also recorded the song sometime later. Which version does he think is the better one? "Regine's!" he immediately declares. "It was made for her." So why did he sing it? "I regret it *nga e*!" he says, laughing. "You know, it paved the way for me. I became a songwriter because of that. It just flowed."

He shares that when he wrote the song, he decided that he wanted a song with no chorus. "*Parang* 'Pasko Na, Sinta Ko,' or 'Tanging Yaman.' *Walang* chorus *iyon*, *nagkuwento lang ng nagkuwento. Pero maiksi*—I think that's why it worked."

Theme song

Another one of his hits, was "Pangako," which was the theme song of another Regine starrer. Ogie shares another anecdote: In 1986, he and Manilyn Reynes were working on a movie. (At the mention of Manilyn's name, the room breaks into a chorus of "*Uuuuuyyyyy!*" Ogie joins the chorus.) They had to stop shooting because that was the time that the Edsa Revolution happened. "So I was calling her and calling her. '*Ano ba iyan? Ang gulo-gulo! Gawa nga tayo ng kanta*!'" And so they did. Over the phone. The result was "Pangako."

Then later on, they worked on another movie, "Michael and Madonna," where Manilyn was Madonna and Rene Requiestas was Michael. "I was 'Banjo'—some insignificant character! *Manliligaw lang ako*!" he recalls. So he approached the director and asked, "*Meron ba kaming* happy moments? *Iyung nagbabasa-basa sa dagat*?" "*Magandang eksena iyan*!" the director said. So Ogie presented his song, which the director liked. It then became the love theme of the movie. "*Kaya noong sinabi ko kay* Reg, '*May kanta akong bagay sa* movie *ninyo ni* Aga, 'Pangako,' *di pa nga niya naalala*!" Ogie chuckles.

Singer or song

So does the singer make the song, or vice versa? "*Parang* chicken or egg *iyan, e*. I think really, it's the song, but the singer has to claim it as his own. Otherwise, it won't work. Like Aiza and 'Pagdating ng Panahon,' *kanya iyon e*, even if she didn't write it. *Kahit sino pang kumanta, si* Aiza *na iyon*," he explains. "Like 'Nandito Ako.' I didn't write that, it's by Aaron Paul. But I claimed it, *akin ito*. This is my song, *kanta ko ito kay* Manilyn, *kasi sila pa ni* Keempee *noon*! (a chorus of '*Uuuuuyyyyy*' again, led by Ogie.) But claim it, and it will be yours!"

CCP president places big premium on communication

HE was on his toes as a dancer for Ballet Philippines from 1973 to 1981. Now, as president of the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP), Nestor Jardin is still very much up and about, what with overlapping meetings all day, followed by an evening of appointments both social and official.

Easy access

Thank God there's Touch Mobile Prepaid GSM for the man who can't sit still. Jardin finds Voice Info "fun because it provides you with easy access to the news." By pressing 8140 on his handset, the CCP head has all the goods on Politics, Weather, Business, Traffic, and his two favorite sections, the day's top stories and entertainment.

"Boy Abunda is a friend of mine," chuckles Jardin about the popular TV host who serves as voice talent for Touch Mobile's "Celebrity Spotlight," "Celebrity Tips" and "Celebrity Watch." "It's good to hear what he has to say."

Voice Messaging, meanwhile, becomes an attractive alternative to the tedious process of answering messages via text. "It's very convenient," avers the CCP president of the Touch Mobile function that lets you send a pre-recorded message or a personal one by pressing 8160 on the handset.

"I set a meeting with a friend through Voice Messaging, and once, I even sent a voice icon to a friend on her birthday. It's easier than texting. I can even send a voice message while walking."

JARDIN. Youth-oriented projects.

Misconception

"It's a misconception to regard art as entertainment and therefore peripheral to our lives," declares Jardin. "Although some art forms are entertaining, they're also manifestations of our culture. And many art forms do communicate. For example, a folk dance may have beautiful costumes, music and steps. But beyond that, it can show the livelihood of the community, like fishing or planting rice."

Teaching Filipinos to become better communicators has always been the thrust of the CCP. In addition to mounting exhibitions and a variety of polished stage performances at its landmark venue on Roxas blvd., the CCP regularly holds workshops, tours, and other activities that foster art and cultural development in key urban centers and the 25 arts councils it helped establish all over the country.

Understandably, most of the projects are youth-oriented, since art and cultural practitioners have observed that "values presented on stage have more impact on an audience, especially on kids. And because art is not only visual but experiential, it's also long-lasting."

Skills

For years, Jardin was an instrument of communication himself. After honing his skills as a member of a folk dance company in high school and the UP Filipiniana Dance Troupe, he joined Ballet Philippines and trained under renowned teachers. He also became a mentor to others when he taught at the CCP Dance School.

Although it has been a while since his last performance—three years, to be exact—this master of folk, ballet, and contemporary dance is quite content dealing with art from behind a desk rather than before an appreciative audience. "Not lately," he says when asked if he misses leaping and bounding on stage. "There's not enough time—and I'm too old!"

Nobel Prize winners . . .

(From page D4)

At the start of the panel discussion, the Nobel laureates were asked how they initiated the process that led to their world-shaking discoveries. Did they start out with a question, or did they first do research or experiments, and the question then sprang out of their preliminary work?

Discoveries

The laureates replied that both approaches were tenable but, from their experience, the best discoveries came from the least-structured processes. "The discovery can't be designed," one of them said. "Our imagination is not agile enough to predict what will come out of it," another laureate more beautifully put it.

"Scientists are driven by different motives," somebody else pointed out. Like what? "Curiosity, a fascination with how nature works, wanting to be the first to solve a problem, looking for a different way for doing something."

"That's why, it's really more art than science, this business of asking an intriguing question—and getting an even more intriguing answer!"

One of the panelists pointed out that some discoveries take a long time being investigated, so scientists had to be very focused, patient and stubborn. What keeps a scientist going through this long and often disappointing process?

"You have to really enjoy what you're doing!" was one answer. Another input: "It's not always the scientist's brilliance that counts. Sometimes, he is simply very lucky!" It was surprising to hear a top scientist talking about luck, but it turned out that he wasn't the only person on the panel who held this view.

Daring

It also helps a lot if the scientist is daring and goes into a rarely-explored area of knowledge. As one panelist put it, "If the question you're asking is obvious, it's likely that somebody else would have already answered it!"

So, the trick is to make the right choices—repeatedly. Every step in an experiment requires the scientist to make key decisions that could affect the outcome of his study, one way or the other. The scientist who makes the greatest number of correct choices ends up with the biggest discoveries, and wins the Nobel Prize!

Creativity

So, there *is* a lot of creativity involved in the scientific process. Scientists who go by the book will most likely remain mere cogs, not pacesetters.

A major factor: It helps a lot if the scientist is concerned about alleviating grave social problems that affect many people. He should sincerely want his discovery to make a positive difference in the world.

So, a possible formula for doing outstanding work, in science *and* in other fields, would be: Have the knack for selecting the right question, and strive to answer it so that you can solve an important problem, so that you can in turn help others. (*To be concluded*)

Blast target schools

"First, it's the malls and cybercafes. I guess schools will be next", guesses one of the CEOs of the country's prepaid Internet cards. There are hints of threat in his voice as he makes this prediction regarding the marketing tactics of Blast (spelled as Bl@st but pronounced as blast), the fastest growing prepaid Internet card in the country today. "When the students try out their (Blast's) service, they'd be comparing their service to ours and frankly, I'd be the first to bow down and say, it's apples and an apple orchard. Blast is powered by SkyInternet with 7,000 dedicated lines and up to 56 k. How can we match that?" the CEO even added.

Indeed Blast has earmarked Manila's largest schools and universities for a series of interventions come January. "We believe we have a great brand, a fantastic service that people ought to enjoy as soon as possible. The sooner we bring Blast to our market, the sooner will they find relief from the connection blues they have been experiencing from the past with their inferior prepaid Internet cards", announces one of Blast's marketing tacticians. "When, and how we bring Blast to schools is for everyone to find out", he adds.

"I think Blast will be so well received in schools as it's just right about time a real competent prepaid Internet comes to the students' aid. I've seen thousands of students flunk their reports simply because they've never gotten any connection from the Internet prepaid card they've relied on. And it's quite a shame that these things happen. Some of these students are really good kids. Geniuses interrupted, I'd like to think", narrates the student leader on Christmas hiatus, Chubby Glenn.

Research suggests that aside from e-mail and chatting, educational research still fall as one of the primary activities students log on to the Net. More than half of studentdom relies on prepaid Internet cards for this function. Sadly, until Blast came along, there was no real prepaid Internet card that students can confidently rely on for continuous connection.

"I've surfed nine hours straight with Blast and sure had a blast doing so. I want to challenge what Blast claims and based on my experience, I say it can't be disputed." shares Cheryl, one of the students who tried out the SkyInternet powered prepaid.

"I'd really rather get a Blast card than a fruitcake", Richard, another student volunteers.

Normally, no student in his or her right mind would want their holiday vacation cut short, but with rumors that Blast prepaid Internet card will be infiltrating schools, some students just couldn't wait to get back to their halls of learning (maybe it's not all because of Blast really, maybe some covertly miss their crushes or their allowance or what-have-you.)

In parallel developments, even Hollywood seems to be affected with Blast's marketing efforts. Unconfirmed reports have it that Madonna has postponed her concert here in the Philippines simply because of Blast.

Dogshows have been postponed as well. Some say it's purely coincidental but others say that they somehow sniff out Blast as part of the reason why such events are suddenly being pulled out.

These are unconfirmed reports we repeat and people must not blame Blast for not seeing their favorite bitches on display.

Fret not, for we have good news and confirmed reports at that that Blast is now available in computer shops and prepaid card outlets in Metro Manila. Soon, Blast will even be available in some of the major bank's ATM.

For now, one thing's for sure. Blast will be hitting the schools soon to the victory of students. As far as inferior prepaid Internet cards are concerned, as their inferiorities are exposed, discontent with their service is expected to rise and rise and rise.

(ADVT.)

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PROMO MECHANICS:

1. Promo duration is from November 20, 2001- January 10, 2002. Promo begins on November 22, 2001 in the provinces.
2. There are two ways of forming a barkada and joining the promo:
   a) Four or five active non-SMART pre-paid subscribers except Talk N' Text subscribers can swap their SIM Cards for SMART Buddy SIM packs.
   b) Four or five active non-SMART post-paid subscribers can swap their SIM Cards for SMART Gold subscriptions.
   * Those who will group SIM swap to SMART Gold must submit the following documents: completely filled-out Service Application Form (SAF) and waiver forms, valid ID, proof of billing address and financial documents for Plans 3000 and 4000.
   * Watch out for the new SMART Gold Subscription Plans.
   * SIM swappers must present an open-line Dual Band celfone with an active non-SMART SIM card (except Talk N' Text SIM card).
3. All barkada SIM swappers will be given a group raffle coupon.
4. All barkada/group SIM swappers should fill out a group raffle coupon with their names, addresses, SMART Buddy/Gold celfone numbers and signatures.
   Group SIM Swappers can submit their coupons at authorized TSI branches, SMART Wireless Centers, or to any SMART/TSI representative in SMART/TSI sponsored events, mall events and school blitzes.
   * Only TSI agents who are authorized by TSI/SMART to man in SMART/TSI sponsored events, mall events or school blitzes are allowed to conduct the SIM swap.
5. A total of four (4) barkadas will win a trip to Singapore for five to watch the MTV Asia Awards plus pocket money of P25,000.00 for each barkada member in the raffle draw on January 15, 2002.
6. SMART will only shoulder the expenses of the trip for a maximum of 5 persons per winning group. The prize is convertible to cash (P200,000.00).
7. Winners will be notified through a voice call, text message, and registered mail.
8. Prizes may be claimed at Ace Saatchi and Saatchi, 10th floor, Feliza Bldg., 108 Herrera St., Legaspi Village Makati City.
9. Winners must present the winning raffle stub, notification letter, valid ID, and their SMART SIM cards. Winners of the trip to Singapore must also present birth certificates and passports.
10. All employees of SMART Communications, Inc., Pilipino Telephone Corporation and their respective ad agencies as well as relatives up to the second degree of affinity or consanguinity are disqualified from the promo.

* SMART will only shoulder the cost for a maximum of five barkada members. Winning barkada with member/s under 18 years old must be accompanied by a guardian. If there are already 5 members in the winning barkada, SMART will not shoulder the cost for the guardian. Winning group with 4 members 18 years old & above may bring along one more companion who is of legal age also.
* Individual SIM swappers from November 20, 2001 - January 10, 2002 may also win P20,000.00 on the January 15, 2002 raffle draw.
* Customer Care Officers, TSI agents and TSI counter representatives may also win P30,000.00 cash prize if they facilitated the group SIM swap of the winning group SIM swappers.
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Cruise talks about Cruz, Kidman

He also expounds on Scientology and his kids, but doesn't disclose the reasons for the sudden break-up of his marriage

CRUISE. New relationship with Penelope Cruz.

LOS ANGELES—Actor Tom Cruise, who recently ended his 10-year marriage to actress Nicole Kidman, told an interviewer for the January issue of Vanity Fair that people should "mind their own business" about his personal life.

Involvement

Yet in a story that hits newstands last week, Cruise, 39, proceeded to expound on his 13-year involvement with Scientology, his kids, and his new relationship with Spanish actress Penelope Cruz, whom he met and fell in love with during filming of the Cameron Crowe film "Vanila Sky," which opened Dec. 14.

"As a person and on film, she invites you in, and she's incredibly romantic and yet, real, you know?" Cruise told the magazine, likening the actress to Audrey Hepburn.

Then, in what the magazine described as "a rare and unguarded moment," Cruise gushed: "I thought, 'My God, I'm your boyfriend. You're my girlfriend!... Cruise and Cruz!"

Cruise shocked Hollywood by filing for divorce from 34-year-old Kidman last February, citing irreconcilable differences.

It later emerged that she was pregnant with his child but miscarried the baby a few weeks later. The pair were officially divorced in August, agreeing to jointly raise their adopted children, Isabella, 8 and Connor, 6.

Exclusive club

In July Cruise and Cruz announced that they were dating. A week later the pair surfaced at an exclusive club in Fiji where he and Kidman had made reservations before they separated. Though Kidman was in Australia at the time, she was reportedly "in shock" that Cruise brought Cruz, the magazine reported.

In August Cruise and Cruz again surfaced, this time with Connor and Isabella, in Telluride, Colorado.

Cruise told Vanity Fair he didn't want to dwell on his relationship with Kidman or disclose the reasons for the

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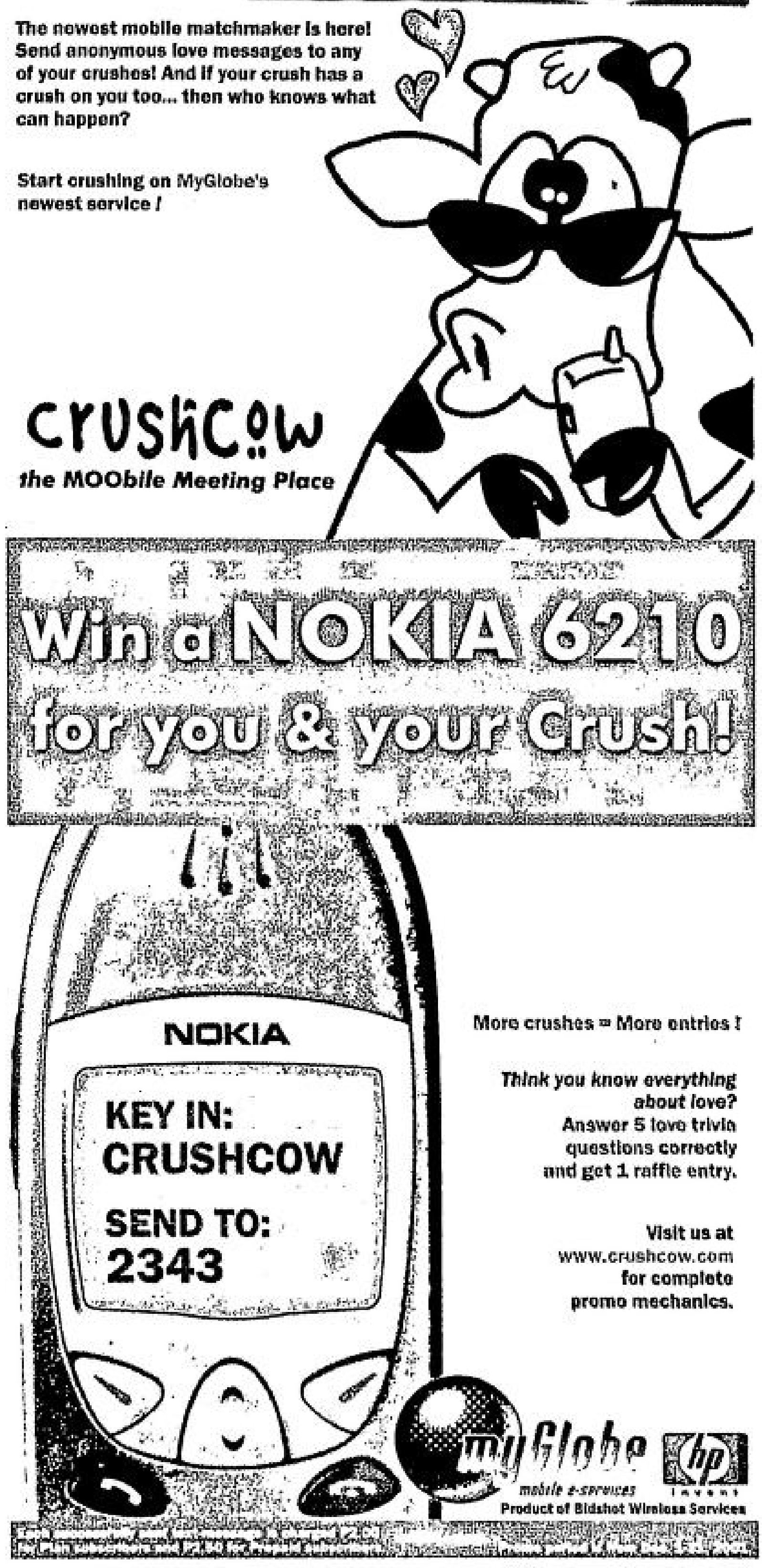
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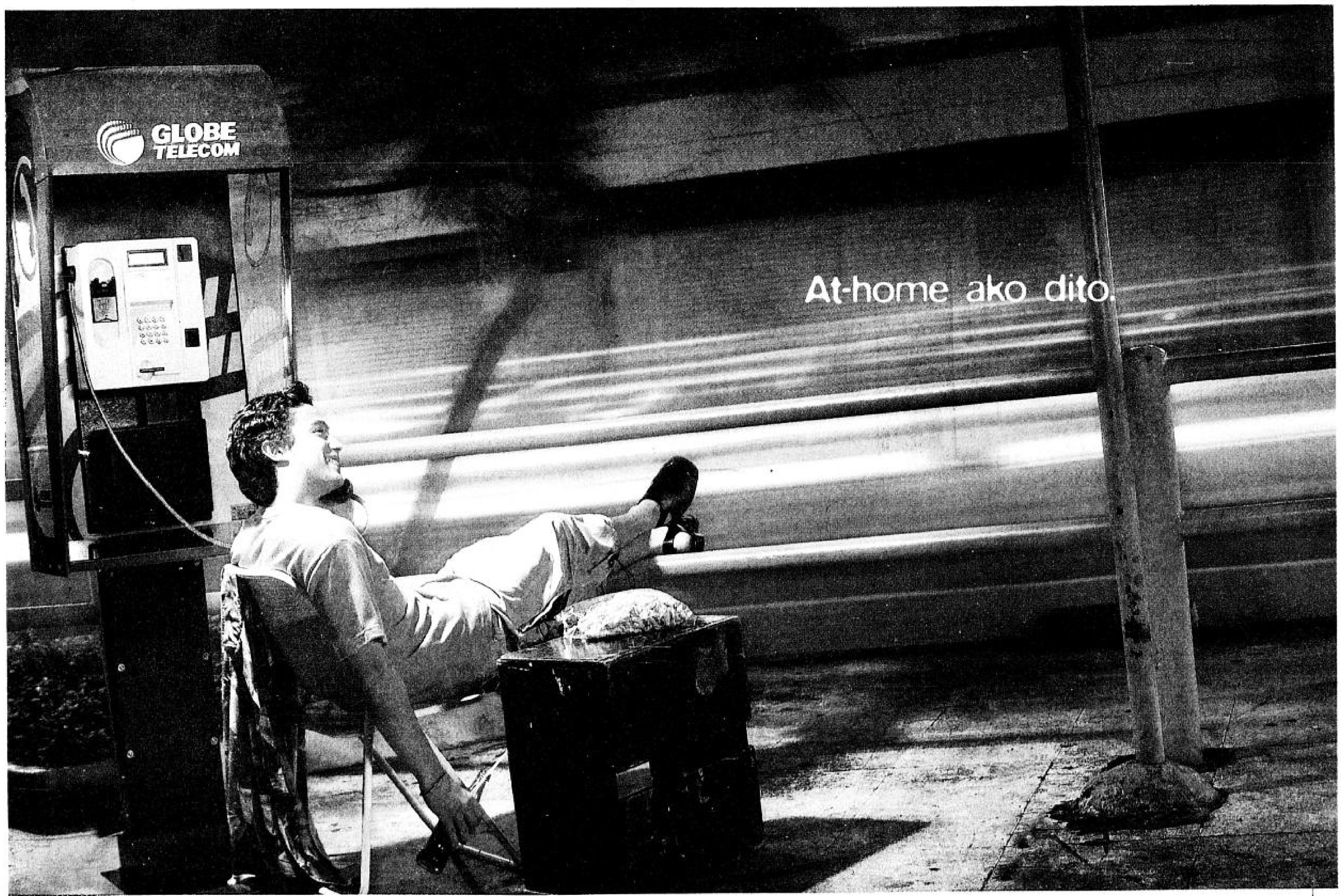

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Hobbit film is 'Lord' of the box office

BY DEAN GOODMAN

LOS ANGELES—Harry who?

Just five weeks after boy-wizard Harry Potter started entrancing moviegoers around the world, the hirsute hobbits of "The Lord of the Rings" are hogging the box office limelight.

First installment

"The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring," the first installment of an ambitious fantasy trilogy based on the works of J.R.R. Tolkien, opened at No. 1 across North America and Europe, according to estimates issued on Sunday by officials at the film's producer, New Line Cinema.

In the United States and Canada, the film grossed about $45.25 million for the three days beginning Friday. Since bowing on Wednesday, it has earned $73.1 million, in line with industry predictions of a $70 million to $80 million launch.

The opening score is "definitely a relief," said Rolf Mittweg, president of worldwide marketing and distribution at New Line, which spent $270 million making the trilogy.

"The Lord of the Rings" sets a record for a three-day December bow, surpassing the $38.1 million launch of "Ocean's Eleven" (Warner Bros.) two weeks ago.

By comparison, "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone" (Warner Bros.) set an overall three-day opening record of $90.3 million. But "Lord of the Rings" was never expected to approach that level, in part because its three-hour running time restricts the number of times it can play each day.

Five new entries

"Lord of the Rings" was just one of five new entries in the top 10 as the movie studios prepare to capitalize on the lucrative Christmas holiday period. Honors for the most spectacular flop went to Jim Carrey's period drama "The Majestic" (Warner Bros.) which opened at No. 8 with just $5 million. Last weekend's champ, Tom Cruise's "Vanilla Sky" (Paramount) fell to No. 4 with $12.1 million.

New Line and Warner Bros. Pictures are units of AOL Time Warner Inc. Paramount Pictures is a unit of Viacom Inc.

In 15 foreign territories, including 13 in Europe as well as New Zealand and South Africa, "The Lord of the Rings" has hauled in $60 million since Wednesday, Mittweg said. Among the standouts: $16 million in Britain, $13.5 million in Germany, $8.4 million in France and $4.8 million in Spain.

"LORD OF THE RINGS." Broke every record in New Zealand.

The films' director, Peter Jackson, shot all three films in his native New Zealand over 15 months, and the next two will roll out over the next two Christmases.

Mittweg said many people attended screenings dressed as hobbits, the little elf-like creatures in the series.

Another world

"Especially at this time of the year, people like to be transported into another world," he said. "It's an epic adventure and fully fledged entertainment."

In New Zealand, where postal authorities did their bit to promote the film by issuing "Lord of the Rings" stamps, the film broke "every record in the book," Mittweg added.

Rounding out the top five in North America, "Ocean's Eleven" held steady at No. 2 with $14.6 million, taking its 17-day total to $95.2 million. Warner Bros. distribution president Dan Fellman predicted the Vegas crime caper would reach $100 million on Christmas Day.

The kids cartoon "Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius" (Paramount) opened at No. 3 with $14 million, and new cannabis comedy "How High" (Universal) lit up the No. 5 spot with $7.6 million.

Both low-budget films, with their clearly defined target audiences, exceeded expectations and will be very profitable, their respective studios said. Universal Pictures is a unit of Vivendi Universal.

On the other hand, "The Majestic" represents another disappointing foray into drama for Carrey, a comic better known for his slapstick turns in such blockbusters as "The Mask" and the "Ace Ventura" films.

Communist witchhunt

Critics savaged the film, in which he plays an amnesiac 1950s screenwriter stranded in a small town unaware that he is being pursued in a communist witchhunt. The Wall Street Journal said it was "definitely the worst big movie of the year."

"I'm not displeased," said Warner Bros.' Fellman, who nonetheless had hoped for a better opening. The film skewed female and over 35, indicating that Carrey's core youthful audience abandoned him.

At least the film did better than "Joe Somebody," starring Tim Allen as a suburban drone. The comedy opened at No. 9 with $3.7 million. The film was released by Twentieth Century Fox, a unit of Fox Entertainment Group Inc.

After 10 days, "Vanilla Sky" has pulled in $45.1 million. "Harry Potter," which fell two places to No. 6 with $6.2 million, has $263.2 million after 38 days.

"A Beautiful Mind," a fact-based drama starring Russell Crowe as a genius schizophrenic, opened in limited release with a stellar $365,000 from 11 theaters in nine cities. The Ron Howard-directed film, distributed domestically by Universal, and goes wide on Jan. 4.

The next new wide releases are the Muhammad Ali biopic "Ali," starring Will Smith, and the Meg Ryan romantic comedy "Kate & Leopold." *Reuters*

'Nearness of You: The Ballad Book' has a strong narrative strain

BY NOELANI TORRE

A BALLAD, according to good old Webster, is "a song or poem that tells a story in short stanzas and simple words." It is romantic and sentimental. Tenor saxophonist Michael Brecker's seventh solo album "Nearness of You: The Ballad Book" (Verve) doesn't exactly fit this definition to a T, but it has a strong narrative strain and is soothing in its simplicity. It is not sentimental in the maudlin mawkish sense. It is, in fact, evocative of all that is tender, gentle, and delicate.

Talent

We are not jazz aficionados (the name Michael Brecker rang but the faintest of bells) but we know talent when we hear it and "Nearness of You" is overflowing with that particular attribute. This is the celebrated Brecker's first all-ballad album where he reunites with fellow jazz giants who also appeared on his first two dates as a leader—guitarist Pat Metheny, pianist Herbie Hancock, bassist Charlie Haden, drummer Jack DeJhonette, and surprisingly, singer James Taylor.

Pat Metheny is also the album's producer—the first time that he has assumed that role for any major jazz artist other than himself and his own group.

Seven-time Grammy-winner Michael Brecker is one of the powerhouses of contemporary instrumental music. He was the first to win "Best Jazz Instrumental Performance" and "Best Jazz Instrumental Solo" citations for two straight years. According to the International Music Network, Brecker "is among the most studied instrumentalists in music schools throughout the world today."

Brother

With his brother, trumpeteer Randy Brecker, they formed the "Brecker Brothers," "one of the most innovative and successful jazz-funk fusion bands" of the '70s. Along with keyboardist/vibes player Mike Maineri, bassist Eddie Gomez, and drummer Steve Gadd (later replaced by Peter Erskine), he put up the group "Steps Ahead."

The quartet recorded seven albums and gained international recognition during the '80s. Brecker, however, did not cut his first record as a leader until 1987 with his solo debut "Michael Brecker," which was voted Jazz Album of the Year by both Down Beat and Jazziz magazines.

Brecker has recorded and performed with many musical titans during the past 40 years—Aerosmith, Chet Baker, George Benson, James Brown, Blue Oyster Cult, Dave Brubeck, Don Cherry, Chick Corea, Freddie Hubbard, Quincy Jones, John Lennon, Charles Mingus, Joni Mitchell, Jaco Pastorius, Lou Reed, Diana Ross, Horace Silver, Carly Simon, Paul Simon, Frank Sinatra, Bruce Springsteen, Steely Dan, Tony Williams, Yoko Ono, and Frank Zappa. "Jazziz" magazine deems him to be "inarguably the most influential tenor stylist of the last 25 years."

Other artists

The other artists in "Nearness of You" are no less brilliant: Producer and guitarist Pat Metheny leads the world famous "Pat Metheny Group" with Lyle Mays, Steve Rodby and Paul Wertico. Considered one of the most innovative jazz musicians and composers, he has more than a dozen Grammies to his name.

Pianist Herbie Hancock used to play with the legendary Miles Davis before forming his own band, "the Headhunters," which included Julian Priester, Buster Williams and Eddie Henderson.

TAYLOR. Featured vocalist.

According to Rolling Stone, with this group he "began to pioneer what would later be called fusion."

Their 1973 album "Headhunters" was the first on which Hancock used a synthesizer, and it became the largest-selling jazz album in history. He has since then "returned to his roots as an acoustic pianist" and went on to release "Future Shock." His single "Rock It" bagged the Grammy for best R&B Instrumental, and the album went gold.

Bassist Charlie Haden "has one of the most personal and recognizable bass sounds in jazz" (Jazz Profiles). Greatly influenced by saxophonist Ornette Coleman, he formed the Liberation Music Orchestrs with composer/arranger Carla Bley. He was also part of the innovative Keith Jarrett Quartet with drummer Paul Motian and saxophonist Dewey Redman. Termed a "venerable master of the music," Haden "brings spirit and soulfulness to every project."

Drummer

Drummer Jack DeJhonette is a classical piano graduate. He collaborated with the Charles Lloyd Quartet in the mid-'60s and he has been engaged by Miles Davis to replace Tony Williams in the former's band.

He has spent much of his time working as a sideman and leading his own groups—"Compost," "Directions," "New Directions," and "Special Edition." "Album Album," his last recording with ECM was "Album of the Year" in the 1985 Down Beat Readers' Poll. Another album, "Audio-Visualscapes" was "Album of the Year" in the 1989 Down Beat Critics' Poll.

Vocalist James Taylor needs no introduction. Along the course of his highly successful career, he has garnered 40 gold, platinum, and multi-platinum awards. His first "Greatest Hits" album earned him the RIAA's Diamond Award, given for sales in excess of 10 million units in the United States. In 1998 he was honored with the Century Award, "Billboard"'s highest accolade, bestowed for distinguished creative achievement.

With all these ultra-talented people featured in "Nearness of You," it is not surprising why the album never seems to strike a discordant note. Composed of eleven ballads, it is divided into two chapters with five tracks each, and an epilogue. But, as Brecker himself explains:

"This recording is more than a collection of ballads – it is the culmination of many years of unfolding relationships among these wonderful musicians . . . It was my intention to capture the intensity that is always present when these outstanding people get together, and to focus it on an area of music typically represented by one or two slower pieces in the usual album program. *(To be concluded)*

Rica Peralejo looks forward to a better year

BY RICKY T. GALLARDO

RICA Peralejo opened the year with the blockbuster film 'Balahibong Pusa' and she's closing it with a good role in 'Tatarin' and her liquor calendar that is creating quite a buzz.

Parelejo is the housemaid Amada in the film adaptation of Nick Joaquin's masterpiece. Throughout the movie, she has no dialogue—only moans and groans when she is possessed by the spirit of lust.

"It's physically draining but really challenging, " she says of her role, "and for the first time, I don't have to memorize lines. But the challenge is even more difficult because I am expected to convey all the emotions without saying anything," she explains.

For the coming year, she hopes she can chalk up more achievements and that her love life will remain as interesting and invigorating!

Eddie Garcia in 2002

Eddie Garcia's film "BRO" failed to land in the magic circle for this year but he's not feeling bitter. Garcia shares top billing with Ronald Gan, who only appears in movies which his family produces. But Garcia says that there's nothing wrong with that.

GARCIA. No bitterness.

"Ronald is a very determined and diligent actor. He comes to the set prepared and doesn't act like a brat even if it's his dad who's directing. Let's give the young man a chance to prove his worth," he says. The film opens next week and both Garcia and Gan have high hopes for it.

Calvin Millado counts his blessings

Amiable Calvin Millado celebrates his birthday today and instead of making grand wishes, he'd rather be thankful for all the wonderful blessings that he has received this year.

"I've been really lucky in terms of the amount of work that's coming my way," he says. For the second year in a row, Millado is Backroom's busiest artist in terms of volume of projects achieved, and ranks among the likes of Ai-Ai de las Alas in terms of talent fee billings.

One of Millado's career highlights for the year is his much-improved performance in the successful restaging of "Rent," which will be followed by a hotly-contested role in 'The Rocky Horror Show' next year. "I'll play a transvestite and I'll sure have a ball!" Cheers!

Wendell Ramos' time has come

For Wendell Ramos, patience is truly a virtue. For six years now, he has been relegated to the sidelines of the award-winning gag show "Bubble Gang." But his long wait is paying off.

Director Joel Lamangan chose Ramos to play one of the more important roles in the movie "Hubog," and the once-reluctant actor is getting good reviews for his above-average performance in the film.

Ramos says he owes his breaks to Douglas Quijano, his manager, mentor and friend. "Tito Dougs has always been low-key but he knows his moves. All I have to do is trust him because I know I'm in very good hands."

Gina Alajar takes it one day at a time

Her movie "Bahay ni Lola" is the current festival front-runner in the box-office race and first-rate actress Gina Alajar is elated.

The good news sort of balances things because the year 2001 has been a roller-coaster ride for Alajar, which saw the crumbling of her relationship with husband Michael de Mesa and the closure of the morning soap "Kirara," which Alajar has been directing for sometime now.

On the homefront, Alajar is happy with her three big boys and two Siberian Huskies all growing up to be "*mababait at matitino*"—quote, unquote.

Cruise . . . (From page E1)

sudden rupture. "She knows why and she is the mother of my children and I wish her well," Cruise said. "I don't care if it piques people's interest. Honestly, people should mind their own business and get a life of their own... My personal life isn't here to sell newspapers."

He credited a 13-year devotion to Scientology with helping him deal with a spectrum of life's adversities from dyslexia to his estrangement his late father to the persistent rumors that he is gay.

Cruise recently filed lawsuits against a Los Angeles publisher and a gay porn star who allegedly Cruise had engaged gay sex. Last week, Michael Davis, who publishes "Bold Magazine" retracted his engaged in homosexual acts and the actor dropped his suit.

Losses

"Life pounds you," Cruise told Vanity Fair." You come across losses. All of a sudden something happens and now you feel like you cannot go forward or it invalidates you."

He said he continues his acting career "for my kids" and that at the same time he aims to shield them from the rumor mill.

"You have to say... 'How would you like it if someone says something that's untrue about you? Now, what do you think about those people that do that? Ou don't have to sit there and listen to it. You can tell them you don't want to hear it." *Reuters*

KIDMAN. Irreconcilable differences.

CRUZ. Incredibly romantic.

Cinemanila filmfest standouts reviewed

BY RITO P. ASILO

(Conclusion)

IF you like visually disturbing scenes, you can't go any further than Kim Ki Duk's "The Isle," shown recently at the 2001 Cinemanila filmfest. Its themes include rape, prostitution, violence and even sado-masochism, and weaves its story through crisp photography and striking images reminiscent of Kurosawa's. The director says these are meant to portray a man and a woman's complementary relationship with each other.

Gory scenes

But if you don't have a liberal mind, we suggest you skip the film. For example, a man who would rather commit suicide than be arrested by the police chooses to "eat" four fishhooks and then pulls them out of his mouth, one by one. A scene later shows the woman doing the same thing, but this time, she sticks it into her privates. Ouch! Worse, a man is shown taking a poop—and you actually sees the gory release.

Surprisingly, despite the sometimes moving, sometimes disgusting images, the film managed to win the Golden Raven in Brussels, the Netpac in Venice and the Best Actress Award for Jung Suh at Fantasporo. Suh's gripping portrayal also won for her this year's Cinemanila Best Actress Award, and she deserves it.

Bong Joon Ho's "Barking Dogs Never Bite" is about an idle part-time college lecturer annoyed by the yapping sound of a neighbor's dog. Amidst domestic and career-oriented issues, he decides to take drastic measures to get back to the source of his annoyance.

"Dogs" is a comedy noir that won awards at the Munich and Hong Kong International Film Festivals.

Jung Ji Woo's "Happy End" may not have been in the original selection of films, but its sudden inclusion is most welcome. It's a tightly structured domestic drama (think Ishmael Bernal) of love and infidelity, with smartly-written three-dimentional characters. A young career-woman finds that both her plain, less ambitious husband and her good-looking lover serve different purposes in her life, so she tries to keep the situation as it is.

Each protagonist, the husband, the wife and the lover, has his/her own vision of a "happy ending." Unfortunately, things have a way of turning out not the way you want them to. And one's happy conclusion may be another person's sad ending.

Of course, French films have always been festival favorites. We have seen Claire Denis's "Chocolat" (1988), not to be confused with the Johnny Depp starrer, as well as 1999's "Good Work," which is about the destructiveness of jealousy, but have always found her French minimalist tack too uninvolving. But Denis always manages to put exotic locations to good use and elicit strong performances from her actors.

Personal loss

Francois Ozon's "Under the Sand" is a wistful, quiet, gut-wrenching study of personal loss and how a person (the superb Charlotte Rampling) deals with feelings of guilt, denial, shame, longing and acceptance.

"Sand" is Gallic wunderkind, Ozon's fourth feature—his first without a gay subtext. This movie moved us despite many quiet moments, which is a testament to the film director's effective handling of the material.

Pal Jackman's "Detector" (Norway) is about a 20-year-old psychiatrist who still lives with his mother, whose hobby is finding metallic objects in the ground. He finds a necklace and a girl who claims she owns it. He falls in love with her and later, finds out about her real identity. She seems to love him but can't commit. With the help of friends and family, he tries to save the relationship that seems headed for nowhere.

The actress who portrays the mother, Hildegun Riise, won Best Actress at the Norwegian Film Festival. The movie's theme is commercial, but the production looks old and cold.

Asoka Handagama's "This is My Moon" (Sri Lanka) may fall under the "art film" category, however abstract that may seem. It is Handagama's social commentary on the gaps that divide the Sinhalese-speaking nation. More than the slow-paced story and occasionally over-the-top acting, we were entranced by the film's beautiful cinematography and its symbolic treatment of the civil war.

Meaningful distances

In every frame, the camera never moves, never pans in or out—only the characters do the moving. And the director "stages" his scenes with a lot of angled bodies and meaningful distances among the principal characters.

While we were not impressed with the uneven narrative and "automatic" performances (characters would suddenly sob or laugh), "Moon" has won accolades in a number of film festivals, including the Singapore and Tokyo International Film Festivals.

Nuri Ceylan's semi-autobiographical film, "Clouds of May," (Turkey) is a simple narrative of how the director, along with his family, shot his first film. The end. But, long before the credits were shown, we had already been fidgeting for quite sometime, wishing we were doing our own movie, swearing it was never going to look like this.

This film may have won acclaim at the Antalya, Bergamo, Turkey and Singapore Film Festivals, but we found it too plain and motionless. Once the director has established his story, he didn't go downhill from there—just went straight on a plateau.

Another excruciatingly long movie is Jan Svankmajer's "Greedy Guts," (Czech Republic). The director comes up with another bizarre reworking of children's tales. He is to the movies what the Brothers Grimm are to fairytales. Like his "Alice" (1988), Jan's experimental take on Lewis Carroll's "Alice in Wonderland," he mixes live actors with huge, sinister, animated puppets.

His new movie is about a childless couple who finds solace in a tree stump that the husband shapes into a baby, and the mother takes to it like it was a real boy.

Unfortunately, the mother's love brings "it" to life and it suddenly develops an affinity to overeating, eventually eating everyone that gets in its way, including postmen, social workers, and, yes, even its parents.

You see slabs of meat fly in every direction. Pretty novel concept, but the director milks this "novelty" too much and lose interest after sometime. Can't he think of new gimmicks?

CINEMANILA/P.E3

Prepare to cross the line in 'Behind Enemy Lines'

EDGE-of-your-seat aerial action and an adrenaline-pumping rescue mission are the hallmarks that make Twentieth Century Fox's new action-thriller "Behind Enemy Lines" a spectacular direct hit at the box-office.

Kinetic style

Music video director John Moore applies to the big-screen the kinetic style he's been known for, allowing actors Gene Hackman ("Enemy of the State") and Owen Wilson ("Shanghai Noon") to shine as true-blue American heroes should.

In the film, Wilson plays Lt. Chris Burnett, a top naval aviator who is frustrated that fragile geo-politics have kept him from what he knows best: flying F/A-18 Superhornet jets into combat.

"We're watching, not fighting," he tells Admiral Reigart (Hackman), who thinks Burnett hasn't really learned what it means to be a soldier. But during a routine reconnaissance mission, Burnett photographs something no one was meant to see and is shot down.

Trapped behind enemy lines, Burnett struggles to survive the relentless pursuit of a ruthless secret police enforcer, a deadly tracker, and countless hostile troops. With time running out, Reigart makes the wrenching decision to set aside the rules of the tightly controlled world in which he operates and risks his career to launch a renegade rescue mission to save the life of one soldier.

Heart

"Behind Enemy Lines" producer John Davis challenged himself and his team to come up with a film that was more than just action and pyrotechnics. His goal was to make a new kind of war movie that would mix action, state of the art effects, politics and, most importantly, heart.

"There is as much action in this film as any I've ever seen," notes Davis, "but I think there's a lot more to it than that. We wanted to bring this genre into the 21st century by dealing with the complexities of current warfare and how that affects the men and women who are serving their country."

The screenwriters reconfigured the Chris Burnett character as an "Everyman" navigator, instead of a "top gun" pilot. "That moves the character out of the realm of the traditional Hollywood hero," writer Zak Penn explains.

"'Behind Enemy Lines' is not really about flying jet heroics; Burnett is a regular guy caught up in incredible circumstances." In casting Burnett, Davis wanted to, as he says, "take the action hero format and turn it on its head." Owen Wilson, who is best known for offbeat comedic roles in films such as "Meet the Parents," was an unexpected choice to play an action hero. This, according to Davis, made Wilson the perfect choice to play Burnett.

"We needed someone who could give us something different, and that's exactly what Owen did," Davis explains. "He's charismatic and funny, and we also learned that he does the action stuff very well. He brings a natural quality that is easy to relate to, much like Jimmy Stewart, Gary Cooper and Steve McQueen did in their day. But Owen also brings the kind of strong edge required for the role."

Wilson's improvisational skills and sideways sense of humor left a strong impression on director John Moore. "Owen is the single best improviser I've ever seen," Moore insists. "He has a rare ability to take an idea and turn it on its head, and seconds later it seems like he's been rehearsing it for months."

Wilson enjoyed tackling the role of an unconventional hero. "The role was kind of like hitting the trifecta for me," he says. "I've played an astronaut [in 'Armageddon'] and a cowboy [in 'Shanghai Noon'], and now in 'Behind Enemy Lines' an aviator."

But what most excited the actor was the opportunity to work opposite Gene Hackman. "I feel like I grew up watching Gene's films," Wilson explains. "It was a real honor to share scenes with him."

To research the role and the world of 'Behind Enemy Lines,' Wilson lived among pilots, underwent survival training and learned the ins and outs of F/A—18 Superhornet jets at a Naval base. The experience was a memorable one. "I really grew to admire these men, who have sacrificed in serving their country," Wilson says.

Military procedures

Gene Hackman already was familiar with military life. A former Marine radio operator, the Oscar-winning actor impressed the filmmakers with his knowledge of military procedures. Hackman's abilities in this area were important to his role, as radio communications serve as the only link between Reigart and Burnett after the latter is shot down.

To lend the film utmost authenticity, the cooperation of the US military was sought by and given to the filmmakers. "It was great to have support at the highest level at the Department of Defense," Moore says. "But more significantly, working on 'Behind Enemy Lines' gave us a chance to interact with the 'guys:' the pilots, mechanics and technicians. Their help and input were phenomenal. I made the movie for them."

Distributed by Warner Bros., "Behind Enemy Lines" is a Twentieth Century Fox film opening soon in Metro Manila.

WILSON. Charismatic and funny--and he also does his action scenes very well.

Cinemanila . . .

(From page E2)

Young singer

Gerard Corbiau's "Farinelli" (Belgium) is a comparatively old film (1994) which won a Golden Globe Award, and an Oscar nomination for Best Foreign Language Film. It's about a young singer castrated in his childhood to preserve the quality of his voice. He grows up to be a famous opera singer.

In Danis Tanovic's satire, "No Man's Land," two Bosnian soldiers wander into a trench, somewhere between the Bosnian-Serbian border, and find themselves trapped in it with a Serbian soldier, during the fiercest fighting between the two warring sides. They soon start arguing about which country started the war. A very engaging film by Cannes winner (for Best Screenplay) Tanovic.

The initially controversial "Erotic Tales," divided into four compilations of short films from critically acclaimed directors from all over, were alternately funny, sexy and lightweight. But, who knows, the "heavier stuff" may not have passed the MTRCB's taste. It was a bit irritating to find some of the shorts in "Part 1" or "Part 2" being repeated in "Part 3" or "Part 4."

But "Erotic Tales 4" had the funniest, most enjoyable shorts in the series, notably Susan Streitfeld's (remember the controversial 1996 film, "Female Perversions"?) "The Summer of My Deflowering" (US), about a teen virgin who wants her "first time" to be memorable, and Israel's Amos Kollek's "Angela," about a 70-year-old man who suddenly finds a source of sexual excitement when he meets a young, intriguing character. This one really got the audience gasping with laughter—a darker version of Billy Wilder's "Some Like It Hot."

Thai films

And then there are the beautifully photographed, visually and thematically edgy Thai films.

Of the four we've seen, The Pang Brothers' "Bangkok Dangerous" was the weakest, but it was still more watchable than many of the films screened in the festival. If John Woo and Wong Kar Wai's violent Hongkong films were described as "poetry in motion," this is Thailand's answer to those movies. Shot MTV-style with minimal dialogue and raw, violent scenes, it follows the activities of a deaf-and-dumb hired assassin and the bleak world he lives in, until he reaches his eventual destruction.

"Dang Bireley and the Young Gangsters" marked the stunning debut of Nimibutr. It's a stylized action film whose true story (about the life of a boy forced into "gangsterhood" by poverty and circumstance, who finds his redemption in the end) is made more engaging by fast pacing, good performances and a throbbing musical score.

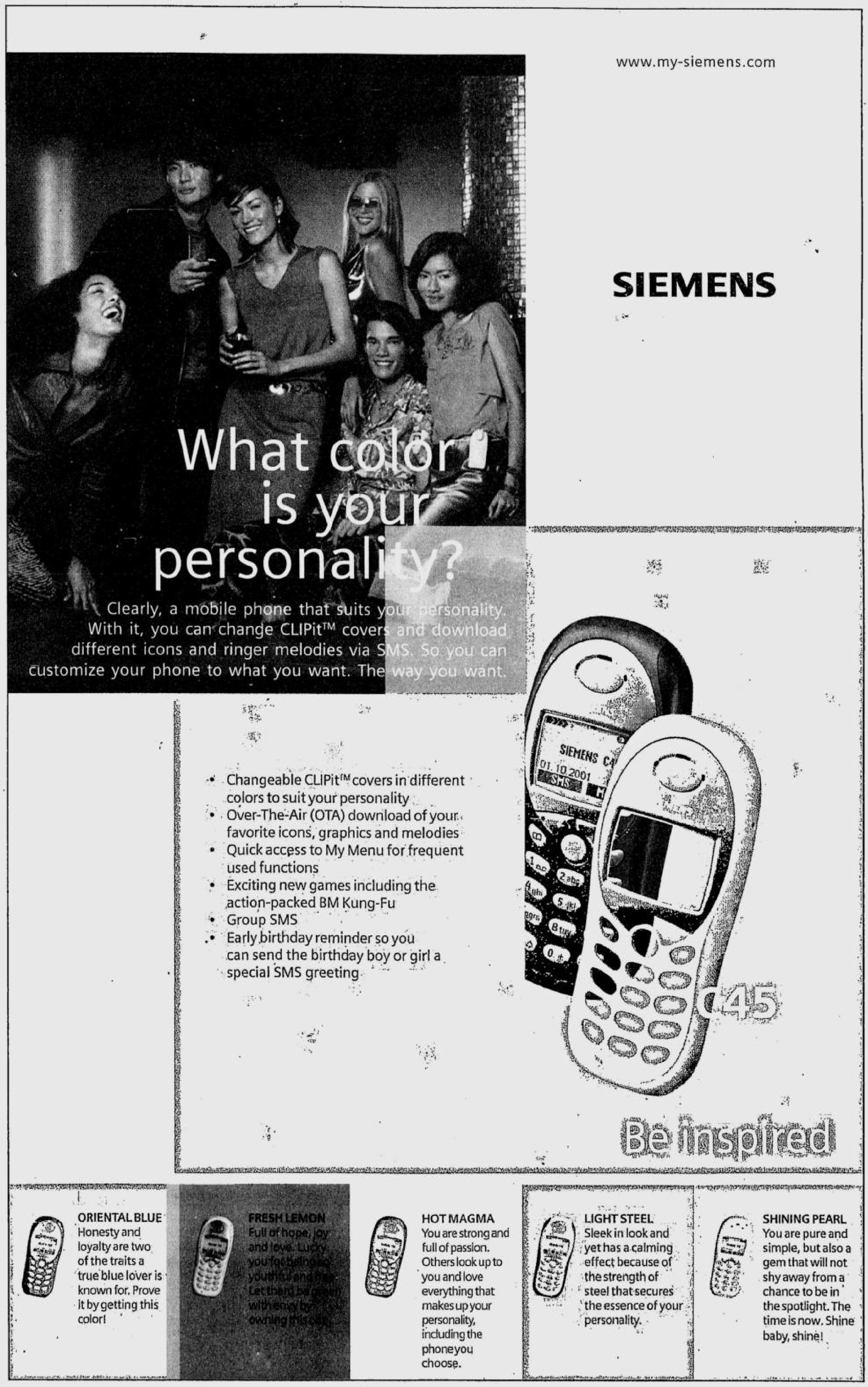
If you saw the surprisingly watchable "Iron Ladies," a very popular Thai film dubbed in Tagalog and released recently in commercial theaters, the actor who portrayed the only straight guy (Jesdaporn Pholdee) in a team of gay and transsexual volleyball players also played the lead in "Dang Bireley."

Shown here last year, Nimibutr's "Nang Nak" is about a man (Winai Kraibutr) who returns home from war and lives with his wife and baby without knowing that both of them are ghosts. The movie won Best Director at the Asia Pacific filmfest, Best Film at the Bangkok International Film Festival and the Netpac in this year's Rotterdam filmfest.

If we enjoyed watching these Thai films, we loved the sweeping narrative and disturbing images of "Jan Dara," the film version of Thailand literature's most controversial 1966 book on sexuality. It tells the story of a young man who is forced to deal with the burdens of discrimination and grows up yearning to seek revenge on his father. Think of an even more sexual "Oro, Plata, Mata."

Viewers were exhilarated by the events in the young boy's life (portrayed powerfully by 17-year-old first-time actor Eakarat Sarsukh, who is a cross between Cogie Domingo and Jao Mapa), the sexually graphic scenes, and the equally stunning performances of all the major characters.

By the last few frames of the film, we sat stunned by the scenes before us and couldn't keep from crying. It was definitely one of the best films screened at the festival.



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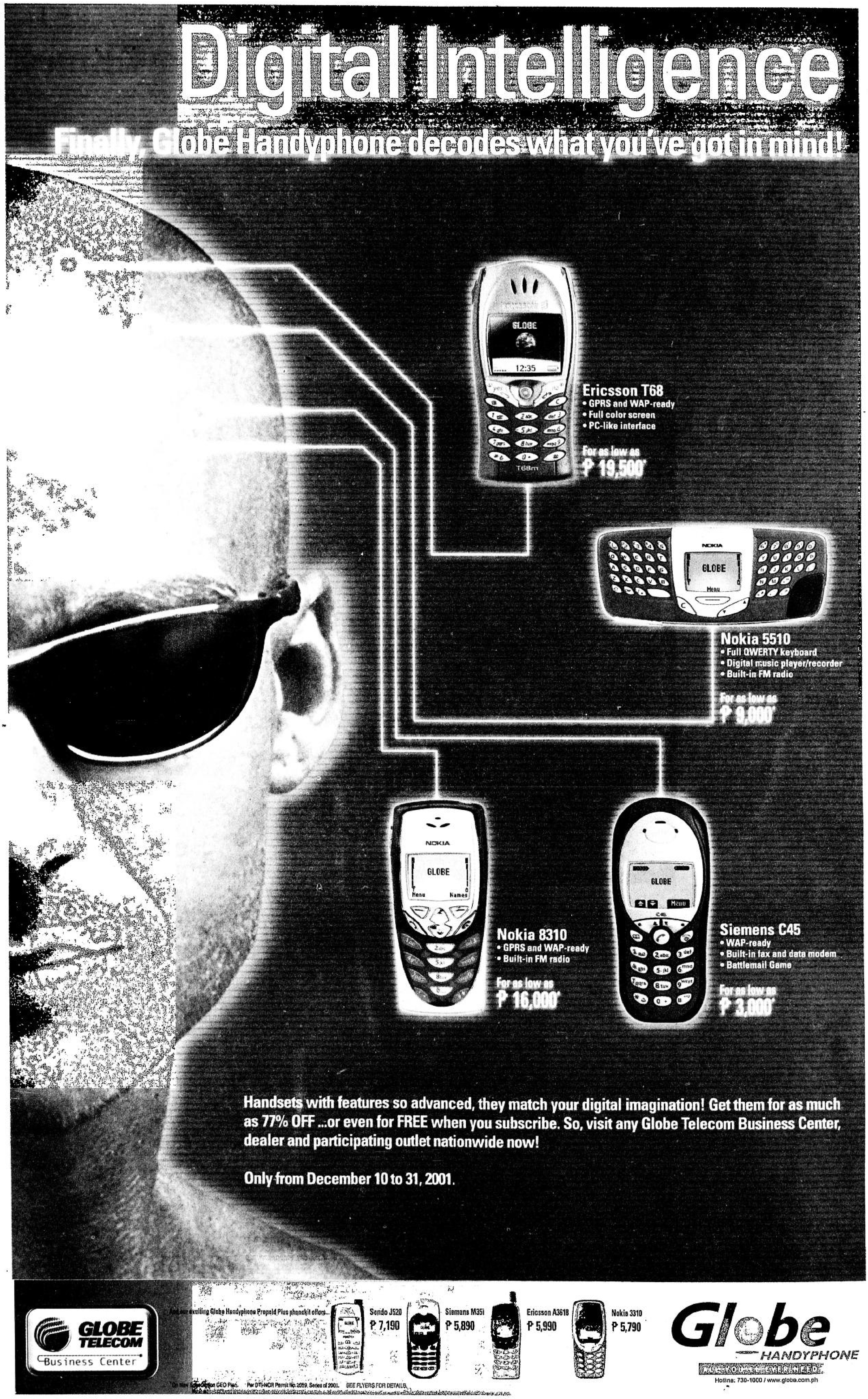

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"CROUCHING Tiger, Hidden Dragon," one of the most critically-acclaimed films in the United States.

Asian talents are hot commodities in Hollywood

But many are still held back by prevailing stereotypes

BY JON HERSKOVITZ

NEW YORK—The best American director was born in Taiwan, one of the top talents in Hollywood did his landmark work in Hong Kong and one of the most critically acclaimed films in the United States last year was entirely in Chinese.

Asian film and Asian stars are hot commodities in the US entertainment world.

Increased recognition

Despite the increased recognition in Hollywood, however, the Asian-American actors who struggle to find work on a daily basis contend that stereotyping is rife and mainstream roles are rare.

The top Asian players in the entertainment world have made their mark in mainstream America.

Taiwan-born director Ang Lee was named America's best director earlier this year by Time magazine. Hong Kong star Jackie Chan commands about $15 million per Hollywood picture and last year's martial arts film "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" sent a charge through the Academy Awards.

But ask Asian-American actors such as George Takei, Robin Shou, Jack Ong, Ravi Kapoor, Alec Mapa, John Cho, Karen Kim and Dustin Nguyen, who have all landed roles on network TV, and they will say Hollywood executives have trouble seeing Asian-American actors in roles beyond martial arts experts and a few other stereotypes.

Stereotypes

As for the stereotypes, there is the evil Asian man, usually a gang boss from a crime syndicate such as a Chinese triad or Japanese "yakuza" gang. Or he can be the undesirable partner who is wrapped up in his work, has left his personality in his briefcase and is negligent toward his family.

For the women, there is the China doll type—a fragile and enchanting beauty with a soft voice and long, dark hair. On the evil side is the dragon lady, the strong, seductive, completely unreliable and utterly corruptible woman.

For both men and women, there is the fish out of water Asian who hopelessly tries to find his or her way in the United States, while snapping loads of pictures, fiddling with computers and speaking English with a hokey accent.

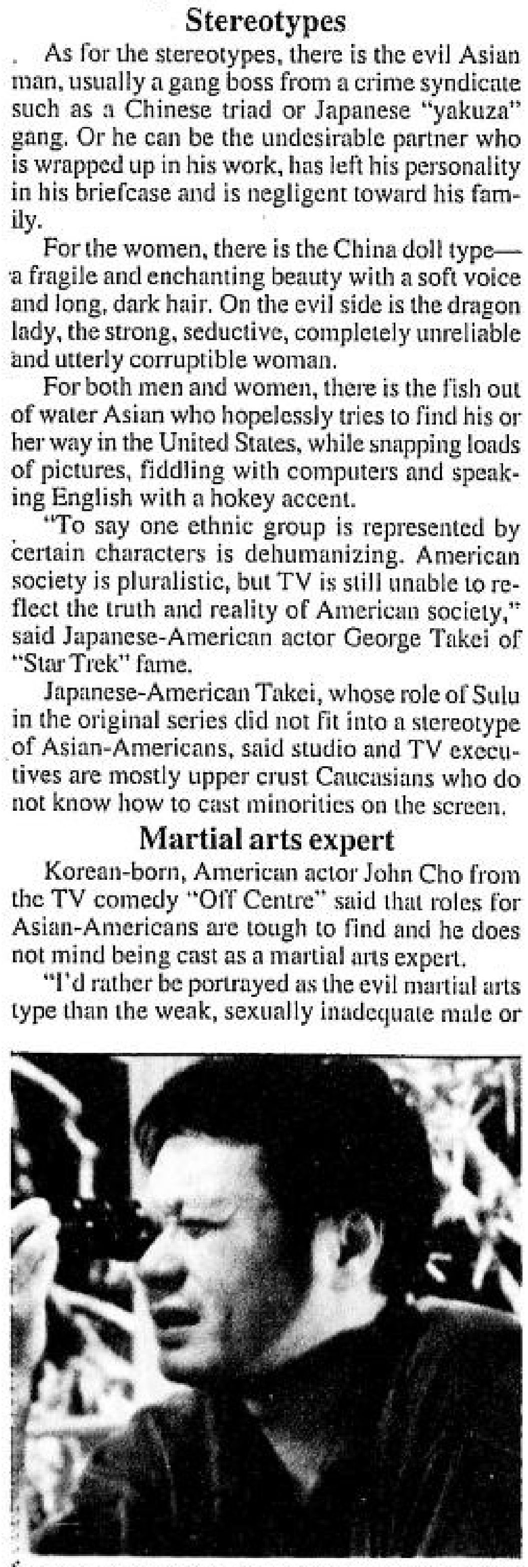
"To say one ethnic group is represented by certain characters is dehumanizing. American society is pluralistic, but TV is still unable to reflect the truth and reality of American society," said Japanese-American actor George Takei of "Star Trek" fame.

Japanese-American Takei, whose role of Sulu in the original series did not fit into a stereotype of Asian-Americans, said studio and TV executives are mostly upper crust Caucasians who do not know how to cast minorities on the screen.

Martial arts expert

Korean-born, American actor John Cho from the TV comedy "Off Centre" said that roles for Asian-Americans are tough to find and he does not mind being cast as a martial arts expert.

"I'd rather be portrayed as the evil martial arts type than the weak, sexually inadequate male or nerdy, impotent fool," he said.



ANG LEE. Named America's best director earlier this year by Time magazine.

JACKIE CHAN. Now makes US$15M per film.

According to the leading union for actors, the Screen Actor's Guild, Asian-Americans accounted for 2.2 percent of all the roles in the movies and on TV in 2000. That number marked a 0.1 percentage point increase from the previous year.

Yet Asian-Americans make up 3.8 percent of the US population and their numbers are even higher in Los Angeles and New York, where much of the filming for TV and movies is done.

"Entertainment executives are conscious of the need to increase minority presence in TV and movies. But the minority characters are often added as an afterthought, and tend to be not-so-well developed," said one Los Angeles talent agent who asked not to be named.

Filipino-American actor Alec Mapa from TV's "Some of My Best Friends" said that while some ethnic groups abound in certain segments of American society, Asian-Americans and Pacific islanders seem to disappear when the camera is on.

Filipino nurses

"Where are all the Filipino nurses on those Chicago hospital dramas? You can't walk into a real hospital without tripping over one," he joked.

"(The movie) 'Pearl Harbor' took place in Hawaii with no Hawaiian people," he added.

TV and movies have had some dismal moments that may have stepped over the border of racism in their portrayal of Asians, such as the Charlie Chan movie series and the Chinese cook character of Hop Sing on one of TV's pioneering series, "Bonanza."

In 1994, ABC built a situation comedy around up and coming Korean-American comedian Margaret Cho called "All-American Girl" in which she played a smart-mouthed Korean-American living with her conservative immigrant family.

The show was the last series where an Asian-American played the lead, and it quickly got the ax, with Cho saying that network executives told her that she was too fat and not Korean enough to play a character modeled after herself.

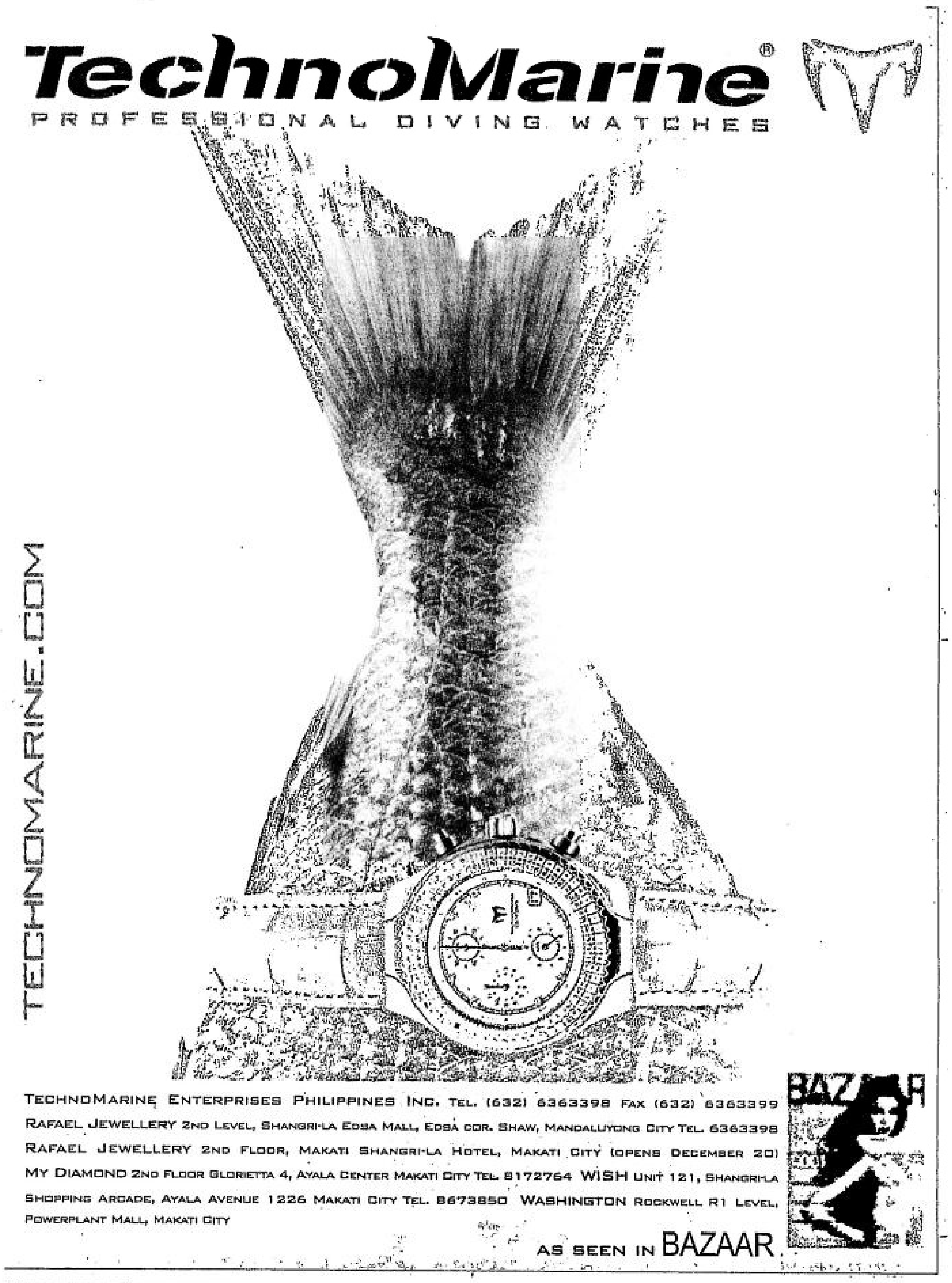
There are big-name Asian and Asian-American players in Hollywood who have the luxury of being able to pick and chose projects. Directors Ang Lee and Hong Kong's John Woo have made films that have ranged from the U.S. Civil War to Tom Cruise spy thrillers.

Actress Lucy Liu of "Charlie's Angels" movie fame and Ming-Na, who plays Dr. Deb Chen on TV's "ER", can hold their own with other stars in the industry.

But what about the other actors who end up taking roles that largely reflect stereotypes, such as the accented Susan Chuang in "Dharma and Greg," the dragon lady Karen Kim in "Battle Dome," or the ex-Hong Kong martial arts character played by Dustin Nguyen in "VIP"?

"We live in a melting pot in America yet we are depriving children of knowledge of the world we live in by not providing them with an accurate portrayal of the American scene," said Chinese-American actor Jack Ong.

"It's sad that the networks can't celebrate our wonderful nation's diversity but add to the problem of misunderstanding by button-holing stereotypes and casting people of color based on racial profiling rather than talent," he said. *Reuters*



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2001's top show biz stories

FACE TO FACE

Inday Badiday

2001 will never be forgotten as the year that everybody would rather forget—because of the many tumultuous, life-changing events that transpired this year. It seemed like God gave 2001 to the devil to play around with—for how else could one explain the incredible chain of disasters that the year brought upon us?

Misfortunes

Despite its being a fantasy world, show business was not spared from the slew of misfortunes that befell us. Thanks for the small blessings that came few and far between, but show biz this year truly looked like a rogue's gallery of tragedies and catastrophies, a freak show of adversities and strife.

The biggest show biz news, of course, was Erap's getting the boot. For many people, this may not have been a disaster at all but God's hand setting aright the way we led our life as a nation—yet, I still believe that, even if he may have been a bad president and husband, he's still a good person deep down.

That tableau of Erap and his family, bidding farewell to the domestic staff on the way to the Malacañang wharf, played back in slow motion in my mind over and over for more than a month—and never failed to bring a tear to my eyes each time. And that surreal footage of him being fingerprinted and photographed like a common criminal was a twist of the knife.

What before was the Erap magic became a kiss of death to all the movie stars identified with the ousted president who entered the political ring last May. Stardom failed to enchant and entrance the voters—big stars like Nora Aunor, Rudy Fernandez, Phillip Salvador, Bong Revilla and wife Lani Mercado, Edu Manzano, Tirso Cruz III and many others ended up as ground beef in the meat factory called Philippine politics.

For many, the biggest show biz news was the kind of curse brought to bear upon the industry that resulted in the unbelievable number of show biz deaths this year. Director and prolific show biz father Artemio Marquez succumbed to a lingering ailment amidst the controversy that most of his children had abandoned him.

Matinee idol

Respected actor and director Eddie Rodriguez, master of the love triangle during his time, also slipped quietly into the night after several heart attacks. Matinee idol of the '60s Ricky Belmonte left a legacy of intriguing but better left unanswered questions about his life, love, marriage and family.

Sweetheart of the '40s Corazon Noble went to where her son Jay Ilagan had gone years before. Paquita Roces, wife of Armando Goyena and mother of the famous Revilla sisters, also returned to her Maker. Former LVN child star Nenita Vidal (aka Dr. Bong Erana) was ripped apart by cancer and was cremated.

Like some morbid character in some black comedy, special friend Gina Pareño totes the urn bearing her ashes wherever she goes. And, uh, yes, she talks to the urn and sleeps with it beside her in bed.

Character actors Ray Ventura and Jun Encarnacion also perished this year. So did former basketeer and occasional actor Larry Mumar, talent manager Joey Gamara and movie reporters Ray Cañete and Robert Perez.

The last three show biz deaths were riddled with controversy. Nida Blanca's gruesome murder continues to challenge the sleuthing and deductive skills of homicide investigators. Like some badly written script, this whodunit began as a tragedy but threatens to end up as a comedy that will elicit laughter from nobody.

Then, there's beauty queen-turned-comedienné Ma. Theresa Carlson's suicidal leap from the 22nd floor of her condo building. Her death opened up a Pandora's box of sordid tales about spousal abuse and mental instability which led her to believe that death was the supreme liberator.

Petty misunderstanding

The third was that of former huggable child star Strawberry, the latest addition to the growing statistics of deaths caused by traffic altercations. How a petty misunderstanding on the road could result in murder is just another proof that ours is a magic realist's world.

Many show biz couples also went their separate ways this year. Like, for the nth and final time, Michael de Mesa and Gina Alajar called it quits. They just grew weary of loving and believing. Preceded by years of quiet rumors about trouble in their marriage, Janice de Belen and John Estrada finally wrenched apart their hearts, once joined together by matrimony.

And there was also the Aiko Melendez-Jomari Yllana break-up, which surprised many because just months before the split, they were still swearing undying love to each other in press interviews.

There were also a lot of movie celebs who had to contend with life-threatening illnesses in 2001. Maritoni Fernandez fought against cancer. Chat Silayan struggled against a rare spinal problem. Jeanne Young had perimenopausal bleeding which scared the living daylights out of her. Alma Moreno discovered she has multiple sclerosis—defined by the medical dictionary as "a disease marked by patches of hardened tissue in the brain or spinal cord and associated especially with partial or complete paralysis and muscular tremor." Pretty scary, huh?

Accident

And Ness' travails didn't end there. There also were the acts of lasciviousness case filed against her son Mark Anthony Fernandez, and the accident that almost claimed the life of her other son Vandolph and had already caused the death of his girlfriend, Ishi Raquiza.

Scandals and controversies became trivial in 2001 simply because there was a surfeit of them. To mention just a few: Vilma Santos received death threats and rumors abounded that her marriage was on the brink of separation allegedly because of the "playfulness" of her husband.

At least five women surfaced to claim that Matet de Leon was their daughter even as Matet picked a fight with her adoptive mom Nora Aunor, who kissed and made up with her when she came to the second night of the latter's Music Museum concert last October.

Willie Revillame was sacked as host of ABS-CBN's noontime variety show "Magandang Tanghali Bayan" while, over at "Eat Bulaga" at the rival station, Francis Magalona had to vanish from the scene for a time after he figured in a drug-related incident.

Still and all, the biggest news of 2001 was the Sept. 11 terrorist attack against the United States. Local show business felt this not only because a lot of movie stars have relatives and friends in New York but also because the industry is not insulated against the fallout from this debacle that has had incalculable repercussions felt all over the world.

Having enumerated all the bad news, it's time to underscore the good ones—especially because we are in dire need of them these days. But do take note that some items in the list are not altogether good. Like for instance, even as many star-politicians failed miserably at the polls, there were also a lot who made it.

Like, Senator Noli Boy de Castro, Leyte congressman Ted Failon, Pampanga governor Lito Lapid, Camarines Norte vice governor Imelda Papin, Laguna vice governor Dan Fernandez, Bulacan board member Daniel Fernando, Lipa City mayor Vilma Santos, Parañaque City mayor Joey Marquez, Caloocan City mayor Rey Malonzo, Quezon City vice mayor Herbert Bautista, councilors Aiko Melendez, Anjo Yllana, Lou Veloso, Cita Astals and many others. Show biz spouses Loi Estrada, Francis Pangilinan and Ralph Recto likewise won their Senate seats.

Wedding bells

Wedding bells pealed in show biz for Raymond Bagatsing and Lara Fabregas, Mandy Ochoa and Gretchen Varela, my writer-director Ansel Beluso and Joyce Supnet—and the most celebrated if controversy-riddled nuptials of all, Aga Muhlach and Charlene Gonzales—for reasons that Amalia Fuentes made sure everybody knew about. This is a classic case of matrimony rent by acrimony.

Then there were the celebrity childbirths. God blessed Aga and Charlene with twins. Cesar Montano was overjoyed when Sunshine Cruz gave birth to Angela Isabelle. Niño Muhlach became a father when wife Edith Millare gave him Alessandro Martinno. Melanie Marquez married an American pastor and gave birth to her fifth child. Carmina Villaroel gave birth to twins.

(Please don't ask me who the father is. Not even Zoren Legaspi will confirm because, according to the show biz grapevine, Mina's annulment case against Rustom Padilla could be severely affected by any confirmation of paternity.)

Angelu de Leon also bore her second child. (Please don't ask me also who the father is. I think, not even the real father knows. It's a secret Angge must have decided to bring to the grave. By the way, is it possible that even she doesn't know for sure?)

Resurgence

Other positive notes in 2001 include the resurgence of Aiza Seguerra, this time as a singer with her huge hit "Pagdating ng Panahon"; the birth of new diva Lani Misalucha after several years in the "womb"; the entry into the big leagues of teen darling Kristine Hermosa, and the auspicious splash into the limelight of mega daughter KC Concepcion.

On the TV front, the soaps continued their preeminence with ABS-CBN's "Pangako sa 'Yo," "Sa Puso Ko'y Iingatan Ka," and "Sa Dulo ng Walang Hanggan" and GMA's "Sana'y Ikaw Na Nga" and "Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin."

The biggest development, of course, was the dominance of the quiz and game show genre—"Who Wants to be a Millionaire?" "The Weakest Link," "Game KNB," "Korek na Korek Ka Dyan" and the local versions of "Wheel of Fortune," "The Price is Right" and "Family Feud." On the UHF channels, "Survivor" and "Temptation Island" are gathering a legion of groupies.

On the movie front, the Cinemanila film festival was reportedly a huge success. So is the current Metro Manila Film Festival. Fine films were shown in both festivals. If only we had the same quality on ordinary days.

But then, there's hope with the creation of a new foundation to be funded by the government to support the industry.

But then *again*, there's piracy and taxes and censorship and stringent competition from foreign films and—Happy New Year, everyone!

Celebrity contestants on a roll in quiz show's special edition

By Nestor U. Torre

QUINTO. No bimbo, she.

VIEWERS had a fun time watching "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire's" Christmas Day special last Tuesday. The celebrity contestants were an interesting mix—TV-film sexy comedienne Rufa Mae Quinto, Sen. Juan Flavier, and Megastar Sharon Cuneta.

Rufa Mae was a "surprise" choice as quiz-show contestants because she projects a "ditzy" and even "bimbo" image, so people think she isn't very bright, and should consider herself lucky if she won P10,000.

Ditzy image

Well, Rufa Mae surprised most everyone (*not* including herself) by winning much more than that. In the process, she proved that her ditzy image was just that, an image, and that there are working brains behind that bimbette exterior.

That stands to reason, because Rufa Mae has a very successful show biz career, and nobody gets to her level by being dumb. She *plays* at being dumb, and that takes talent—and brains.

For his part, Senator Flavier disarmed everyone by announcing right at the start that he would be happy if he won P2,000! That got a laugh and, more important, it lifted the pressure from his shoulders to win a hefty, "senatorial" amount in the quiz competition.

Hefty amount

The witty senator got another laugh when, upon winning P2,000, he announced cheerfully, "*O, puwede na akong umuwi!*" But he went on to win—*and* win—until, like the evening's other celebrity contestants, he had won a hefty amount for his chosen beneficiaries, the indigent children being helped by "Kapwa Ko, Mahal Ko."

Quinto and Senator Flavier were hits with the viewing public, so one wondered how Sharon would top them. No problem, she just up and won a million bucks!

As she answered one question after another, it was clear that Sharon was on the ball—and on a roll. She may not have finished college due to the pressure of work, but she was obviously well-read, knowledgeable and, her best trait of all, curious and interested about *everything*.

That intense curiosity really served her well last Tuesday night. We trust that it also inspired her many fans to be as interested in acquiring knowledge as she is.

When Sharon was told by quizmaster Christopher de Leon that she had already won P200,000, she beamed. "Well, at least, *hindi na kahiya-hiya 'yon!*" That said a lot about the extra pressure that celebrities have to contend with when they compete in charity quizzes like this.

Possible ridicule

It's really a wonder why they so gamely expose themselves to possible ridicule (if they lose) in this wise. The charity angle must be a big factor—also, the desire to prove that show biz stars aren't the "dumb but lucky" people that some viewers believe them to be.

Well, Sharon not only proved that, she also went on to show that she was more knowledgeable than most contestants—and viewers, for that matter. After all, she's only the second "Millionaire" contestant to actually win a million pesos.

Interestingly, she went from P500,000 to P1 million by opting *not* to follow the lead of her own husband, Sen. "Kiko" Pangilinan, who's supposed to be pretty sharp in his own right. The question was about Robert Flaherty's first documentary, and Sharon wasn't sure so she used her "Phone a Friend" lifeline, to call her husband, who advised her to answer "City of Gold."

But, after a lot of thinking and ESP-ing and what-not, Sharon daringly chose "Nanook of the North," which, as any film buff will affirm, is the right, million-peso answer.

P2M question

Sharon's ESP also served her well when she chose *not* to answer the P2 million question, about the site of the first Winter Olympics. Had she answered, she would have picked Austria, but the correct answer was France.

Anyway, Sharon's pot of P1 million was intact, and it will make a lot of needy people happy, indeed. All luminaries should also rejoice, because Sharon, Senator Flavier and Rufa Mae have proven that celebrities *aren't* the idiots that some viewers think they are. In fact they can do much better at quiz shows than you and (gulp) me!

Mikey Arroyo says 'Di Kita Ma-Reach' has more action than drama

By Edmund L. Sicam

MIKEY and LJ Moreno

PRESIDENTIAL son Mikey Arroyo is pleased that his film, "Di Kita Ma-Reach", has made it to the Metro filmfest. And now that he has passed that hurdle, he wouldn't mind winning awards for his movie as well.

Mikey says it wouldn't be a big surprise if the movie won some awards because they really worked hard on this movie.

Major role

Because this is his first time to have a major role in a filmfest entry, he was not able to celebrate Christmas Eve and Christmas Day with his family. But Mikey says, his family, specifically his mother, understands.

He also wishes that his mother would watch his movie, as she has been known to watch films in moviehouses. Part of the job of lead actor in a filmfest movie was riding a float on Dec. 24. Reporters expressed concern that this could be a security risk for him, being a presidential son. His comment : "It is, *pero* so what, *di ba?*"—said in true action star fashion.

Mikey reveals that his film is more of a drama than an action film. "*Kasi ang* action, *sa huli na lang, kasali sa* finale."

He admits that he had a difficult time with the dramatic scenes since he is not used to this kind of acting. "*Nahirapan ako, pero dahil sa* workshop, *dumali.*" He shares one scene in particular where he was especially challenged: "Yung monologue *kong isang page at kalahati! Gusto ni direk, tuhog, ayaw niya ng* cut to cut. *Diyos ko po!*"

For once, instead of a law enforcer, Mikey plays a poor guy who also happens to be an expert billiard player. LJ Moreno is a rich university student doing her thesis in the slum area, where they meet and fall in love. The other actors in the movie are Ana Capri, Elizabeth Oropesa, Tommy Abuel, Raymond Bagatsing, Eula Valdez and Tonton Gutierrez.

General patronage

Mikey proudly declares that his film is meant for general patronage. He says there are no bold scenes in the movie, but he does get to kiss his leading lady. "*Hindi na ito daya!*" he says, in reference to his movie with (Judy Ann Santos) wherein the kiss was not actually completed.

Even though he has grown up in a very privileged environment, Mikey says it was not difficult for him to essay the role of a poor man. "*Iyung aming lahi, galing sa maliit, e. Tsaka noong lumalaki ako, mga barkada ko, mga anak ng mga boy namin, mga* driver *namin.*

He says it wouldn't be a big deal if he had fallen in love with a girl from a poor family. "It doesn't matter! *Basta mabait ang puso, sinsero, marunong magmahal, tsaka tanggap niya iyung ginagawa mo sa buhay mo.*"

No marriage plans

Recently, the news spread that Mikey was getting married to his girlfriend next year. The actor clarifies that there has been no marriage proposal made yet. He admits though, that they are talking about it, but not very seriously. But he does know that they are very much in love and become more and more in love each day. Mikey shares that his girlfriend does not yet completely understand the movie world.

Between acting and politics, Mikey divulges that he feels more at home in show business. "Actually, when they ask me what industry you feel you belong to, my answer is show business. But if you ask me what industry I give more priority to, I'll answer public service, because I have a mandate, because that's my duty. While show biz is my livelihood, I give more importance to public service, but I enjoy show business more than politics."

No pressure

He is grateful that his career is blossoming at present and denies any presidential intervention to get him into more films.

Mikey explains "*Habang kumikita iyung pelikula, kukunin nila ako. Kahit anak ako ng presidente, kung lugi ang pelikula,* they won't get me anymore. Then I'll have to produce my own movies." Mikey says that he does not want to go into producing, but he would probably consider it if other producers don't hire him anymore.

His Christmas wish is probably similar to what his mother would answer, given the same question: "Peace and prosperity. Unity. Stop the politicking." His New Year's wish for himself : "To be well-guided by the Lord almighty in all my dealings, and to be extremely happy and fulfilled personally."

Basie, Como honored as Grammy lifetime achievement winners

COMO. Timeless legacy.

LOS ANGELES—Bandleader Count Basie, singers Perry Como, Rosemary Clooney and AL Green and singer-songwriter Joni Mitchell will receive lifetime achievement awards at next year's Grammy ceremonies, the Recording Academy said recently.

Seminal recordings

Recording Academy president Michael Greene said the five musicians had "given us some of the most distinctive and seminal recordings of the last century" and had left a timeless legacy. Recordings by all five artists have already been inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame.

Basie, one of the most influential bandleaders of the swing era, died in 1984, and Como, who epitomized the relaxed popular style of the 1950s, died in May. Clooney made her name in the 1950s as a jazz-based vocalist with recordings such as "Come on-a My House" and later collaborated with legends such as Duke Ellington and Bing Crosby.

Pop classics

Soul singer Al Green's hit singles of the 1970s, such as "Let's Stay Together" and "Tired of Being Alone" have become pop classics, while Canadian-born Joni Mitchell emerged from the 1960s folk scene to embrace pop, rock and jazz, all infused with her distinctive voice and syncopated rhythms.

DJ Alan Freed, who popularized rock 'n' roll in the 1950s through television and radio shows such as "American Bandstand," will receive a Trustees Award along with engineer and producer Tom Dowd, whose use of stereo recordings in the early 1950s revolutionized the way music was recorded.

The winners will be acknowledged during Grammy award week in Los Angeles in February. *Reuters*

'Corky Romano' pokes fun at the Mafia

GOOD-NATURED veterinarian Corky Romano is stunned when he receives a surprising call from his long lost father, "Pops," an underworld crime lord who has been indicted by a Grand Jury. With his trial just two weeks away, it looks as if the Mafia kingpin is finally going down. However, he still has an ace up his sleeve.

Pops realizes that the one person who can turn the tables and infiltrate the FBI undetected—and steal the evidence against him—is Corky, who was banished from the "family" at a young age, for not fitting in.

Corky is only too happy to help his father and get back into the good graces of the family, and his brothers intimidate a computer hacker into creating a fake resume to get Corky into the FBI. But the hacker panics and goes overboard, making Corky appear to be a super agent, a reputation that he must live up to.

Under the guise of Agent Pissant (pronounced pee-SONT; "It's French!"), he stumbles into the hallowed halls of justice and tries to fake his way through one tough assignment after another while hunting for the elusive incriminating proof of Pops' illegal activities. As investigators close in on the Romano family, a disguised Corky gets caught in their dragnet. But Corky has set up a sting of his own—one that will blow everybody's minds, in Touchstone Pictures' comedy, "Corky Romano."

Emotional son

Comedian Chris Kattan, who has created so many hilarious characters on "Saturday Night live," brings to life Corky Romano, the emotional son of a mob boss who's called upon to infiltrate the FBI.

Kattan tried to bring a sensitivity to the character that would appeal to comedy audiences. "Corky's not an idiot—he just has no sense that there could be anything bad in the world. He completely blocks out everything negative," says Kattan. "His whole life is very simple and light and nothing abnormal. Everything is cuddly, happy clouds and pretty birds. So when he's put into this situation where everything's negative, he can't even function. Everything just falls apart.

"For example, Corky believes his father is a landscaper and he thinks his father is at all these important landscaping meetings. Yeah, you could say that Corky's in denial about his family."

For producer Robert Simonds, the character of Corky Romano was perfectly suited to Kattan's talents.

"I'd known Chris's work from five seasons on 'Saturday Night Live,'" he says, "and I'd been wanting to do a film with him—one that was designed around his talents. He's got an incredible talent for physical comedy, but he combines that with a charming, accessible screen presence—he's appealing in every way."

'The Majestic' revisits dark days of Hollywood blacklist

By Anthony Breznican

LOS ANGELES—Jim Carrey is not now, nor has he ever been, a member of the Communist Party.

Denial

Such a denial is unnecessary these days, but during the Red Scare of the late 1940s and '50s the House Un-American Activities Committee would call actors, screenwriters and directors to testify about their political backgrounds. The implications of the questions could be enough to ruin a career.

"I think if we don't have a common enemy in this country we start eating ourselves alive. We start attacking ourselves," says Carrey, who stars as an accused screenwriter in the drama "The Majestic."

The film revisits the post-World War II era of the Hollywood blacklist, the HUAC interrogations and the fear spread across the nation by Red-hunting politicians, most notably Sen. Joseph McCarthy, R-Wisc.

The Motion Picture Academy has an extensive new blacklist exhibit opening in February, detailing the careers devastated by the political probe and the lingering effects on the film industry's creativity.

Profiles

Meanwhile, the Hollywood writers guild plans to devote its magazine to the theme that month, including profiles of late blacklisted writers and brief memoirs from the era. Some DVDs also now include extra features about the role older films played in that era's show-business history.

The HUAC hearings prompted studios to fire hundreds who refused to renounce unpopular political views or "name names" or answer the oft-asked question: "Are you now or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?"

A half-century later, many of those directly involved are dead but the wounds

THE MAJESTIC/p.F3

'The Majestic' revisits dark days of Hollywood blacklist

(From page F2)

haven't healed.

"How could they heal?" asks film historian Larry Ceplair, curator of the Motion Picture Academy exhibit. "There was a lost decade when all these people who might have made some wonderful films weren't allowed to work."

"The Majestic," a Capraesque drama in which Carrey plays a blacklisted screenwriter who takes on a new identity after suffering a memory-erasing car crash, views the committee's interrogations as an affront to free speech.

Mistaken for a missing war hero, Carrey's amnesiac character gets a lesson in freedom and courage while federal investigators try to hunt him down.

Cynicism

Frank Darabont, the film's director who made "The Shawshank Redemption" and "The Green Mile," characterized the cynicism that arose from the anti-communist hearings as a "poison that started seeping into the culture."

"People often say that America started losing its innocence with the Vietnam war and Watergate," Darabont said. "I think it started much earlier on with these damn hearings, with HUAC and McCarthy.

"Such a giant vile lie was being told and so many people believed it for so long and got suckered into it."

Some people questioned by the committee were communists; and secret testimony released by the federal government in August showed how leftist influences in Hollywood could be insidious.

Screenwriter Jack Moffitt testified in 1947 that John Howard Lawson, a writer, member of the American Communist Party and founder of the Screen Writers Guild, advised him to "try to get five minutes of left-wing doctrine into every script you write."

Still, most people were blacklisted only for ties to socialist or pacifist causes during the Great Depression.

"I'm very proud of my years as a communist. We weren't Soviet agents, but we were a little silly, idealistic and enthusiastic and thought there was a chance of making a better world," said screenwriter Norma Barzman, who was blacklisted in 1949.

She and her late husband, fellow screenwriter Ben Barzman, continued to write, but submitted the films under "fronts" or assumed names. The Writers Guild of America has restored some of their credits, such as hers for the 1946 comedy "Never Say Goodbye" and his for the 1961 epic "El Cid."

Blacklist

Barzman said she hopes "The Majestic" renews interest in the blacklist, but she's disappointed that Carrey's character is not a real communist.

Blacklisted screenwriter Abraham Polonsky, who fought for decades to get credit for the things he wrote, actually removed his name from the 1991 blacklist drama "Guilty by Suspicion" because director Irwin Winkler changed the lead character from a communist to a wrongly accused liberal.

"It fudges the issue," Ceplair agrees.

Polonsky, who died in 1999 at 88, is considered a hero by many for accepting his place on the blacklist rather than deliver names to investigators.

Polonsky, a model for Carrey's character in "The Majestic," said he thought it was wrong for the government to attack people's political beliefs. *AP*

CARREY. Plays a blacklisted screenwriter.

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PAOLO with Janice de Belen in "S-Files" . . .

Paolo Bediones times three

By Nestor U. Torre

PAOLO Bediones has been on TV for only a few years, but he's already become a favorite choice of producers to host their shows. He's dependable, that's why, and looks good, thinks fast on his feet, works hard, is able to shift from persona to persona, and doesn't balk at difficult assignments.

Similar

For these reasons, Paolo has been given *three* TV shows to host. Some other TV talents have even more shows, but they tend to be similar in type—mostly comedies, or musicals, or dramas, etc. Paolo is unique because each of his three shows are very different from each other:

"Extra, Extra" is a weekday magazine show that covers both features and public affairs. Thus Paolo needs to look "credible" on the program, even as he doesn't ignore its need to sometimes be entertaining, and even fun-oriented.

On the other hand, on the "LG Digital Quiz Show," Paolo has to come across as a teacher-quizmaster whom high-school students can look up to. Thus, he has to be very sure about facts, the correct pronunciation of unfamiliar terms, etc.

Youthful air

At the same time, however, he was chosen to give the program a youthful air that young viewers can relate to, so Paolo has to remind himself that he can't be too formal, and must "hang loose" enough to put both contestants and viewers at ease.

Finally, on "S-Files," Paolo has to be show biz-savvy as he dishes out entertainment news and controversies, interviews all kinds of stars, and keeps the program's energy level high. Even rather standard items have to be made to look exciting, so Paolo has to be more hyper here than he is on, say, the "LG Digital Quiz Show."

Another challenge for Paolo is how to relate differently to his female co-hosts on the three shows. On "Extra, Extra," his co-host is a certified beauty queen, Miriam Quiambao, so he has to look his tall and dashing best.

Thankfully, Miriam isn't hung-up on her beauty-queen image, so both she and Paolo get to do some "just-folks" stuff that's great for mass-viewer empathy, like their recent series of features on blue-collar jobs.

. . .and Regine Tolentino in "LG Digital Quiz Show."

Quiz program

On "LG Digital Quiz Show," Paolo's co-host is the perky Regine Tolentino, so he can play it younger. But both of them have to remember that the show is basically a quiz program, so they have to comport themselves in a manner that the teachers they deal with won't find too chummy for comfort.

And, on "S-Files," Paolo's co-host is veteran TV-film star Janice de Belen, so he correctly defers to her as far as star value is concerned. True, he started with the show before she did, but there's no question that the show's ratings have been boosted by her decision to co-host it on a regular basis.

Professional

To his credit, Paolo doesn't let on, by way even of body language, which of his three co-hosts he feels most comfortable with. Ever the professional, he gives each of his female partners the right amount of attention and cooperation.

Looking at Paolo's TV career on the longer term, however, there may come a time when he would have to decide which he would most like to do, news/public affairs, or entertainment. If it's the former, he may eventually have to leave "S-Files." If it's entertainment, he may have to add acting to his on-camera activities. Which will it be, Paolo?

De Niro plans Tribeca filmfest

NEW YORK—Actor Robert De Niro on Thursday announced a plan to hold a new film festival in Tribeca, an upscale neighborhood in lower Manhattan struggling after the Sept. 11 attack on the World Trade Center.

40 features

The Tribeca Film Festival, open to the general public, is to be held May 1-5, showcasing, about 40 feature-length films and 20 shorts by emerging and established filmmakers from around the world.

Film screenings will be held in venues throughout the neighborhood in an effort to boost foot traffic and help small businesses, which have suffered since Sept. 11 as people were deterred frin the neighborhood by safety concerns and limited street access.

Over the past 20 years, De Niro has become a fixture of the neighborhood, opening the chic Tribeca Film Center and Tribeca Productions with producer Jane Rosenthal in 1988.

De Niro and Rosenthal said the groundwork for a film festival began a few years ago, but the Sept. 11 attacks lent urgency to the effort.

Actors

They were joined by actors Meryl Streep and Ed Burns, director Martin Scorsese, Gov. George Pataki and Empire State Development Corp. Chairman Charles Gargano to announce the plans. Gargano lauded the $5 billion film industry, which employs 100,000 people in the state.

Scorsese, when asked if he might premier his upcoming "Gangs of New York" at the festival, responded by stressing the importance of festivals as a platform for emerging or foreign film makers.

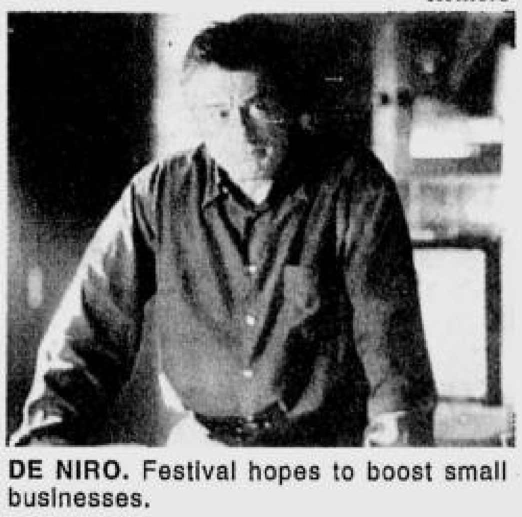
"I think what's needed here is four days and nights of a bunch of young people coming down, and people whose films were unable to be accepted in other venues," he said.

The festival will include a free outdoor screening of a film retrospective, a special presentation of films celebrating New York, and one full day of discussions and seminars about cinema, media and the arts.

Streep said she hoped to be on the jury, which will present an Emerging Filmmaker Award and an award for Best Short Film.

The name Tribeca, or TriBeCa, was coined for the area approximating a "tringle below Canal Street." It is directly to the north of the Financial District and the former site of the Twin Towers.

Reuters



DE NIRO. Festival hopes to boost small businesses.

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Huwag tawaging 'weird.' Baka magtampo 'yan'

Junior
INQUIRER

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2001 ◆ 12 PAGES ◆ VOLUME 6, NUMBER 13

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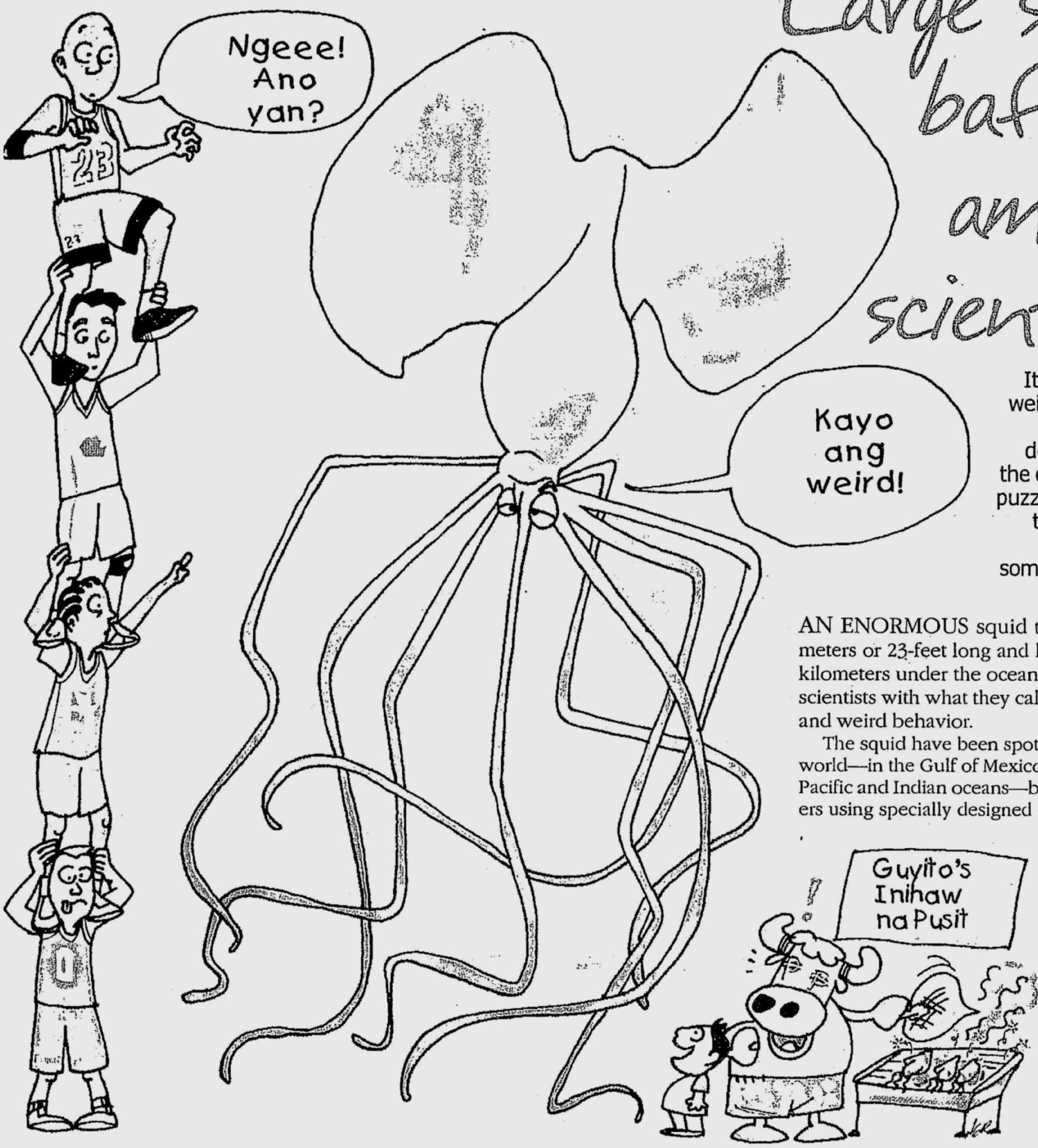
WHAT'S INSIDE:

- New Year's Funny Beliefs Page 5
- Story: Farewell Tio Jose Page 6
- Iggy Ipis Book Reviews Page 10

Large squid baffles, amuses scientists

It's large! It's very weird! And it lives in the darkest and deepest depths of the ocean. Scientists puzzle and marvel at this strange, new species of something-like-squid


Ngeee! Ano yan?
23
23
0
Kayo ang weird!
Guyito's Inihaw na Pusit

Imagine four 6-foot tall basketball players standing on top of each other's shoulders. That's how tall the stray squid is.

AN ENORMOUS squid that grows 7 meters or 23-feet long and lives as deep as 5 kilometers under the ocean, has baffled scientists with what they call its strange looks and weird behavior.

The squid have been spotted all over the world—in the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian oceans—by undersea explorers using specially designed craft.

Large/p.4

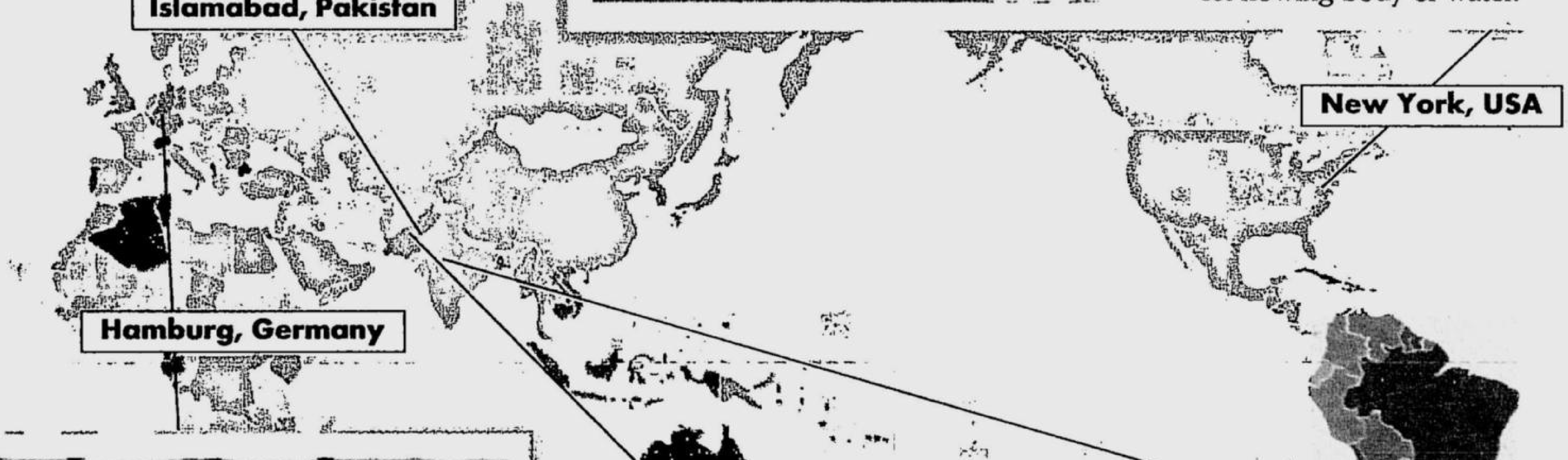
WORLD SCOPE

Songs for Peace

PAKISTANI schoolchildren sing patriotic songs during Remembrance Day Ceremonies on Dec. 11 at the US Embassy in Islamabad. The international commemorations are meant in part to remind the world that people from more than 80 countries died in the attacks on the twin towers and the Pentagon and the crash in Pennsylvania on Sept. 11. ***AP***

Monks' Mandala

TSERING Phuntsok rasps sand from a metal funnel as he works on a traditional Tibetan mandala sand painting at the Smithsonian Institute's Museum of the Native American. Phuntsok is one of 20 Tibetan monks of the Drepung Loseling Monastery who have come to New York to create a mandala for those who have suffered in the wake of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. After they finish the painting in one week, they will—in accordance with custom—will sweep up the sand and put it the nearest flowing body of water. ***AP***



Farewell Pfennigs!

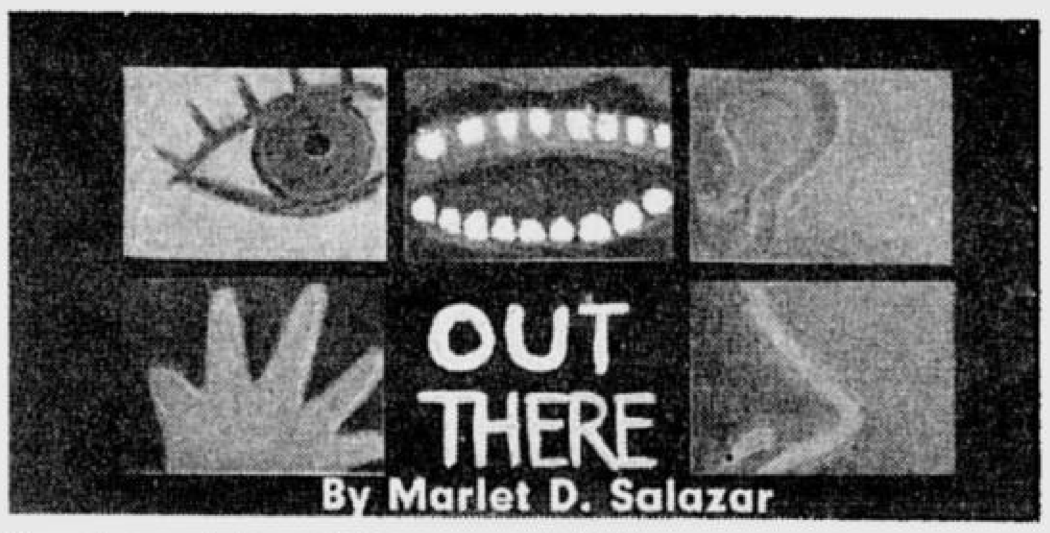
GERMAN Pfennig coins are prepared for melting at the copper factory Norddeutsche Affinerie. The factory began melting the old coins, early this month. Like Germany, the following countries will stop using their old currencies and start using the Euro by Jan. 1: Austria, Belgium, France, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain. ***AP***

A Gift of Smiles

A GROUP of Afghan refugee girls are all smiles as Eid gifts are passed out by a relief agency at Shamshatoo refugee camp. The "Eid al Fitr" on Dec. 17, or "Feast of the End of Fasting," marked the conclusion of the Muslim month of Ramadan. ***AP***

Who's Mr. International?

ALEXANDER Aquino of the Philippines, winner of the Mr. International pageant, is flanked by first runner-up Anibal Martignani of Venezuela (left) and second runner-up Leroy Vissers of Holland. Aquino defeated 35 other contestants from around the world, to win the coveted trophy. ***AP***



Got something for Out There?
Send us the info two weeks in advance. Our fax numbers are 897-4793 up to 94. Don't forget to include your contact numbers and addresses.

Workshops

FREE WRITING WORKSHOP. A free workshop on creative writing is open for public school students ages 10-16. Workshop starts on April 2002. Complete the following requirements and send to P.O. BOX 355, Pasay City Central Post Office, Pasay City: a photocopy of your school I.D., your teacher's recommendation, photocopies of written works, and a self-addressed stamped envelope. Deadline is on Feb. 20, 2002.

Contests

KID-KALIKASAN. Join the "Kabundukan, Ilog at Dagat Kalikasan" poster making contest. Contestants must be 7-12 years old, residents of Bicol, Eastern and Central Visayas, or in the Caraga region. For more important info call up the following Community-Based Resource Management Project office near you: CBRMP-Bicol 3F ANST. Bldg., Washington Drive, Legazpi City, tel. (052) 481-4562; CBRMP-Central Visayas 5F BF Bldg. N. Escario St., Cebu City, tel. (032) 412-6745; CBRMP-Eastern Visayas 2F Timo Romano Bldg., Real St. Sagkahan District, Tacloban City, tel. (053) 321-1388; CBRMP-Caraga 3F Aguilar Bldg. Pili Drive, Butuan City, tel. (085) 815-0320; and CBRMP-Central Office 7F EDPC Bldg., Department of Finance, BSP Complex, Roxas Blvd. Malate, Manila, tel. (02) 526-7335, 523-6325, or send an email to folay@info.com.ph

TEEN LIT CAMP. Adarna House and Filipinas Heritage Library invite teens ages 13-16 to submit their works in fiction, essay or poetry and vie for a slot in the 2nd Annual Teen Lit Camp. It sis weeklong out-of-town camp for teen writers, discussions, and other activities related to writing. For more info call up 372-3548 or email adarnahouse@adarna.com.ph

Activities

DISNEY ON ICE. It's back! The yearly serving of Disney on Ice is ongoing until Jan. 6. Watch Mickey, Minnie, Pinocchio, Buzz Lightyear, Woddy and characters from "Mulan," "A Bug's Life," and "The Lion King" will delight you with breathtaking skating production numbers at the Araneta Coliseum. Tickets are available at all SM Ticketnet outlets.

A PIXIE BIRTHDAY. Spend your birthday in magical Pixie Village. Choose among these four party themes: The Elfin Wave Adventure; Fairy's Wheel of Fun Party, Carousel Party and Fly High birthday party. Pixie Forest is an indoor fantasy amusement center for kids and their families. For more info call up 850-3568.

Check this out!

WORLD'S BEST CHILDREN'S BOOKS. Want to see a loads of exciting and really good books? One set of the 2000 International Board on Books for Young People Honour List—a biennial selection of the world's best children's books—is now permanently on display at the International School Manila. Those who want to see the collection can call up 372-3549 or send an email to pbby@adarna.com.ph.

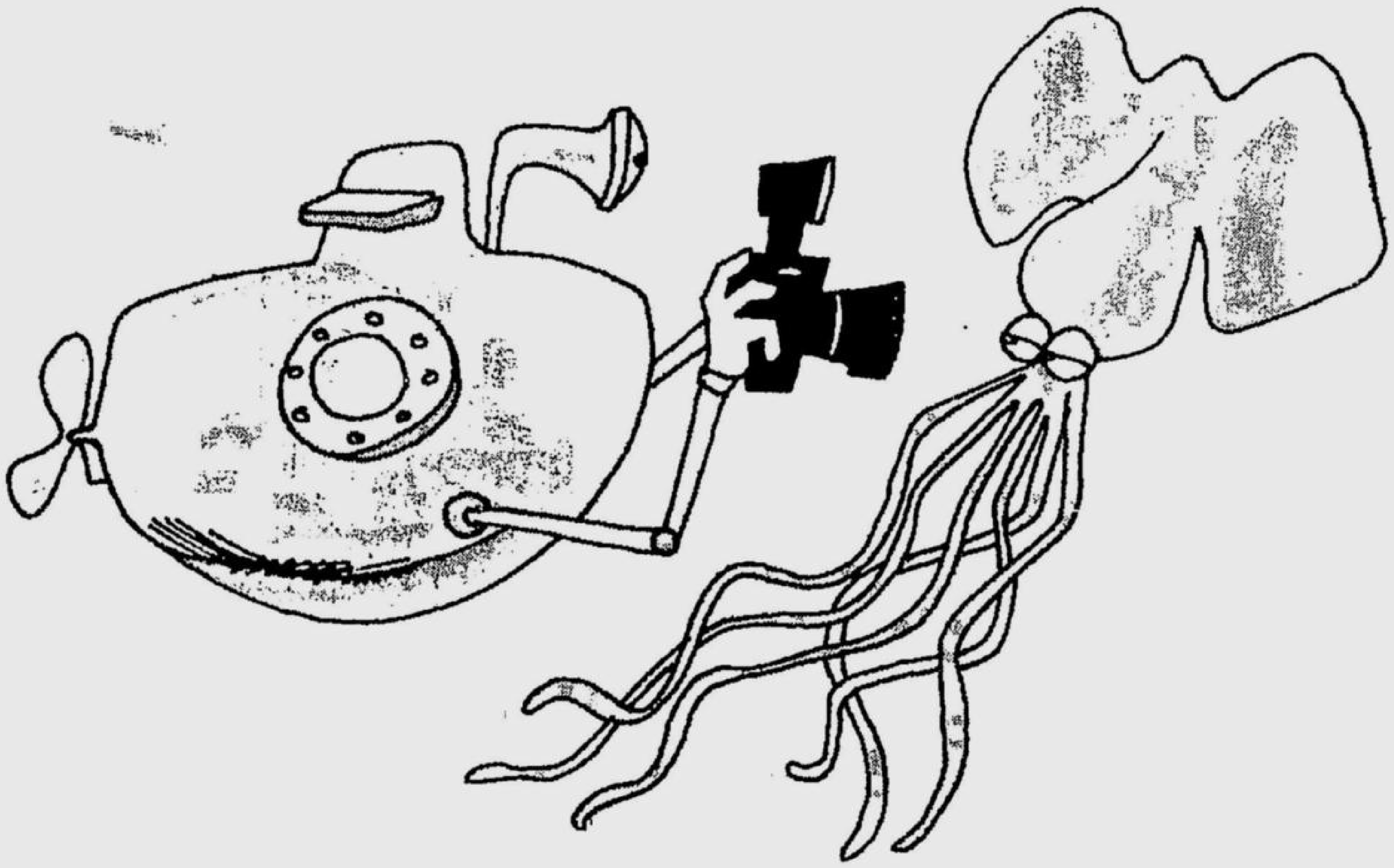
Museum Moments

KLAYMAN SA MUSEO. Have fun with Kuya Ray as he teaches you how to mold animals and many other shapes using colorful clay. That's every Thursdays, 10 a.m. at the Karapatan Hall, Museo Pambata, Roxas Boulevard corner South Drive, Manila. For more info call up 523-1797.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST. Catch the skating Disney characters on Disney On Ice at the Araneta Coliseum.

Large squid baffles, amuses scientists

(from page 1)



"These are real mystery," said Michael Vecchione of the National Marine Fisheries Service and the National Museum of Natural History in Washington. He describes the squid in the latest issue of the journal Science.

"They behave strangely but they also look really weird," he said in an interview.

Squid-looking, but not squid-like

Vecchione, who put together observations from several scientists working in various countries, said no one has captured one of the odd squid yet, so it has not been named.

But its un-squidlike demeanor has Vecchione and other biologists speaking in decidedly unscientific terms.

"This is well beyond a new species," he said. "New species are a dime a dozen. This is fundamentally different."

Vecchione said the squid do not act or look like other squid, which tend to be quick-moving and highly visual. Instead of having two arms and eight tentacles, the new squid has 10 appendages that all look alike.

"The really long skinny arms are so much longer than the squid's body," he said. "We don't know of any *cephalopod* that has arms like that."

"Never seen anything like it!"

The squid were found at very deep depths—one at 3 miles under the ocean off the coast of Brazil, but most at between 6,000 and 10,000 feet.

Vecchione, who looked at a video taken by both robotic deep-sea submersibles and a few taken by people aboard other submersibles, said the squid did not move much at all.

"Whenever the submersible came up on one, it was in a characteristic posture, floating vertically in the water with the arms spread out," he said.

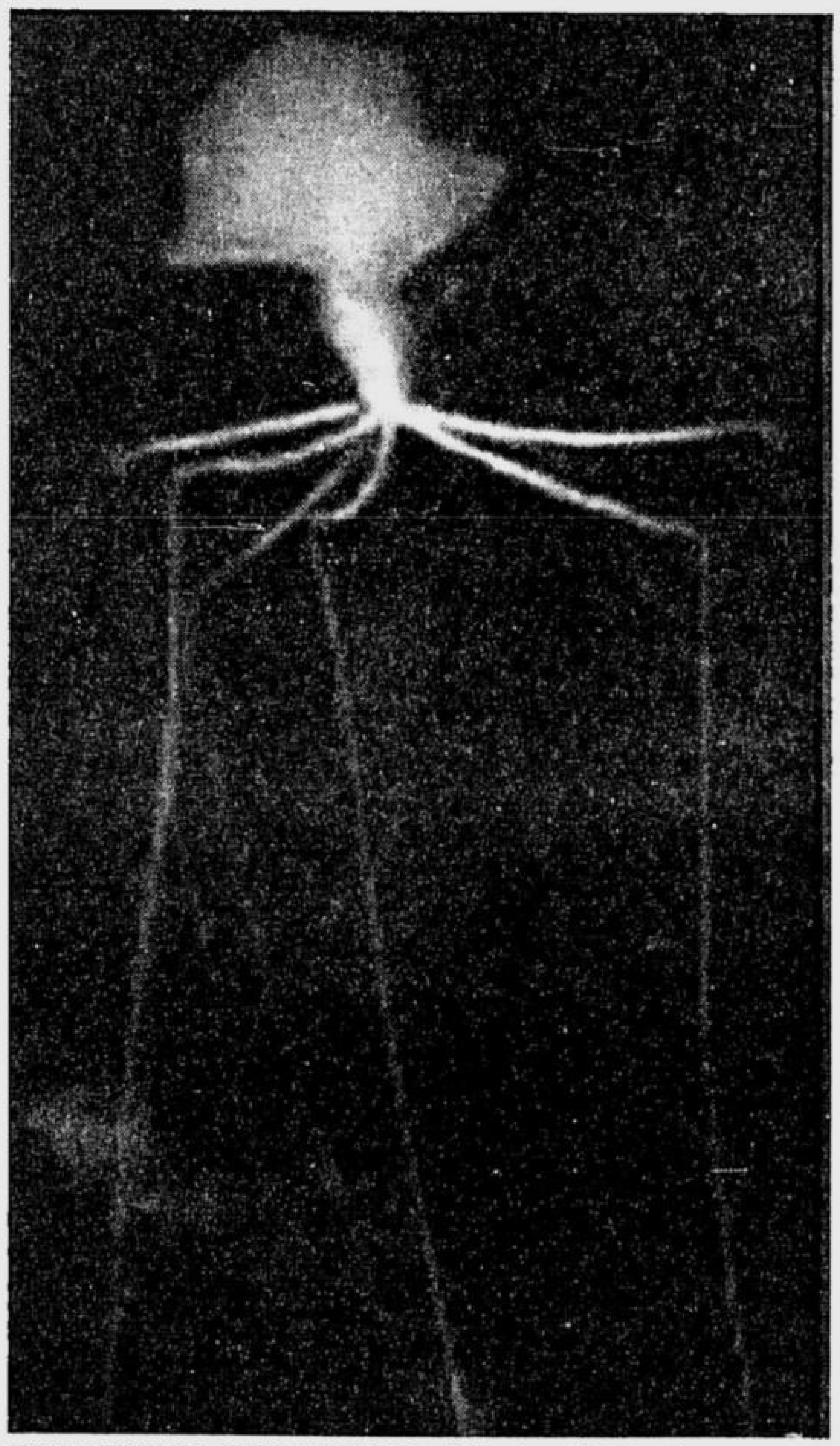
Texas A&M University oceanographer William Sager is one of the researchers who photographed the squid in the Gulf of Mexico while exploring in the deep-diving Alvin submersible.

"I had never seen anything like this creature," Sager told Science. "It just hung there, looking at us, as if suddenly seeing Alvin float up like a whale with lights was no big deal. We photographed and videotaped it for 5 to 10 minutes, and when we got to shore, we went looking for someone who could identify it."

Where Strange is Normal

Vecchione said it is not surprising that the animals are strange—anything living at that depth, with the huge pressures, cold and lack of light, would look different from creatures found at shallower depths.

The skinny tentacles may not be used to grasp prey—which is what most squid do with them—but may be used like a net, instead, he said.



COLOSSAL CALAMARI. A July 1992 photo of a luminous deep-sea squid in the eastern Atlantic Ocean observed from a submersible at a depth of 2,950 meters. The creature, which lives in the cold, inky black depths, 3 miles below the surface of the ocean has been discovered in photographs taken by deep sea submersibles. AP

"I think those long extensions are really sticky," Vecchione guessed.

"One of the animals bumped into the submersible and got tangled up in it.

The animal seemed to have a problem letting go. It might go around waiting for small prey like crustaceans to stumble into it and get stuck—sort of like a living spider web."

The squid—which should not be confused with giant squid, which are an identified species, may be the adult forms of some juveniles found in recent years, Vecchione said. These were named *Magnapinnidae*, which means "big fins."

"All the juveniles came from the Pacific and they came from much closer to the surface—200 meters from the surface," Vecchione said.

More Weird Creatures

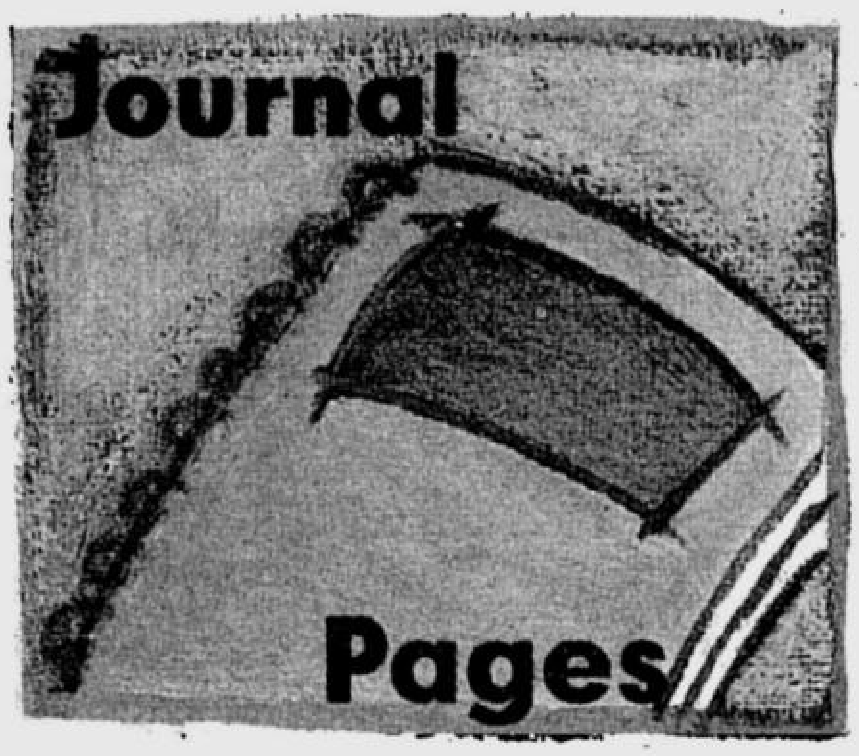
"But it is not unusual for young to be near the surface and then go deeper as they mature."

Vecchione said the squid join an array of unusual creatures being spotted for the first time as improved technology makes underwater exploration more common.

He hopes a program being started up by the Washington-based Consortium on Research and Education to run a census of deep sea life will reveal more about the squid and other deep-sea creatures.

"I think there are a lot of really strange things down there," he said. "Every time someone goes down there and looks they find something really strange. It's Eureka time."

Reuters



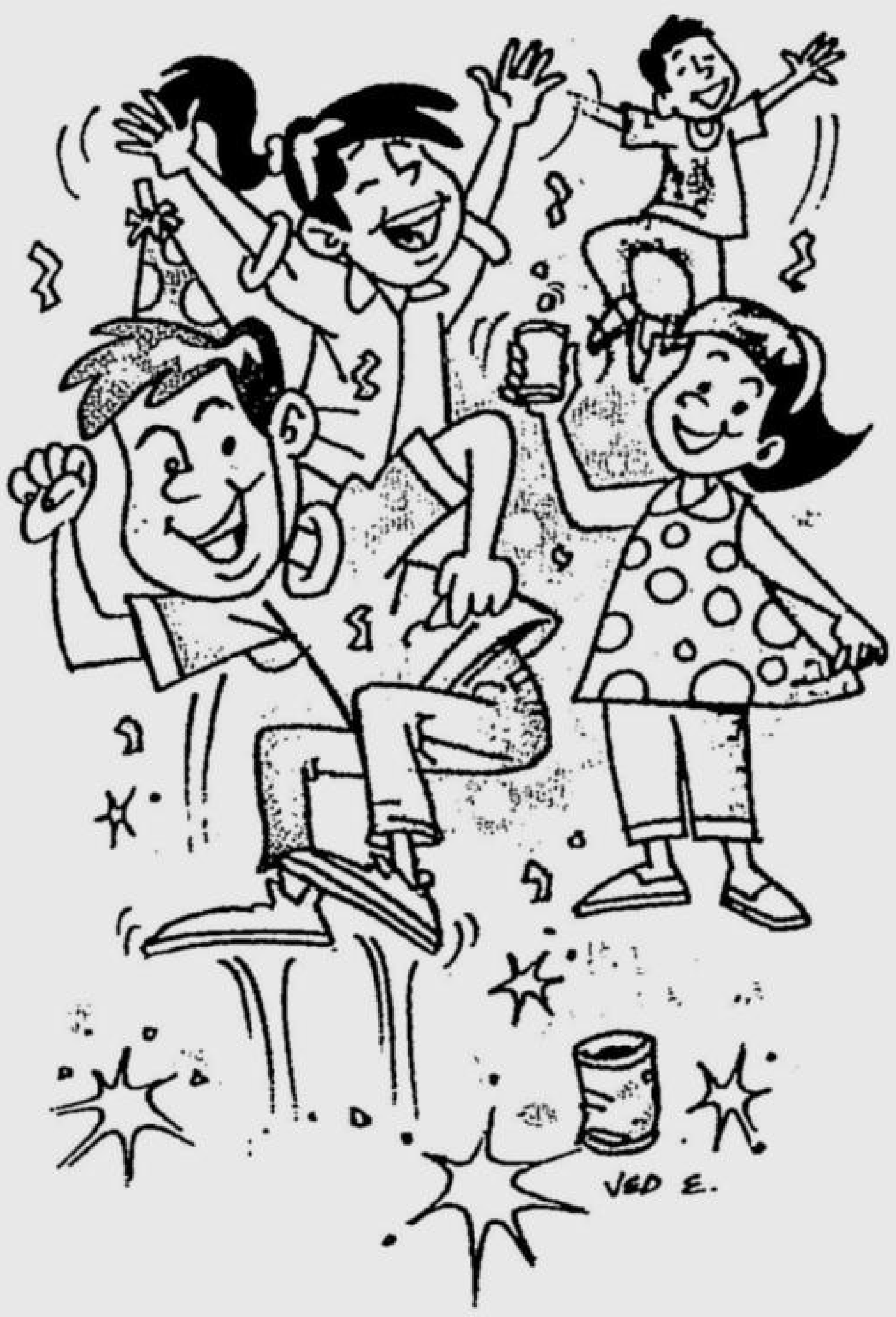
New Year's Funny Beliefs

By Monica Lualhati
St. Benedict College

RIGHT after Christmas, all of us get ready for the next big event of the year—New Year! Almost everyone goes through a lot of preparations to celebrate the first day of another year.

People do a lot of funny things—like jumping up and down at the strike of midnight, or eating 12 pieces of grapes. Some believe in wearing polka-dotted clothing since this means that they will have a lot of money during the year. Some make a lot of noise and light firecrackers too, hoping that these will bring them happiness throughout the year. Some are simple and just eat together as a family with 12 kinds of round fruits on the table.

In some provinces, people open all their windows so good luck can come in. I don't think we can do that here, unless we want to invite flies, mosquitoes and thieves into our homes. They also place coins in cans, shaking them when midnight strikes while chanting "*Paramihin mo! Pramihin mo!*" ("More money! More money!") hoping that they will have more money during the New Year.



Of course, aside from these things that people do, there are a lot of superstitious beliefs too. Like trying to find money or even asking for money on New Year's Day. And, as long as they don't spend this money during the year so that they will never be short of money. Another one is that whatever you are feeling on New Year's Day, you will continue to feel that way for the rest of the year. So it is very important to feel happy on New Year's Day.

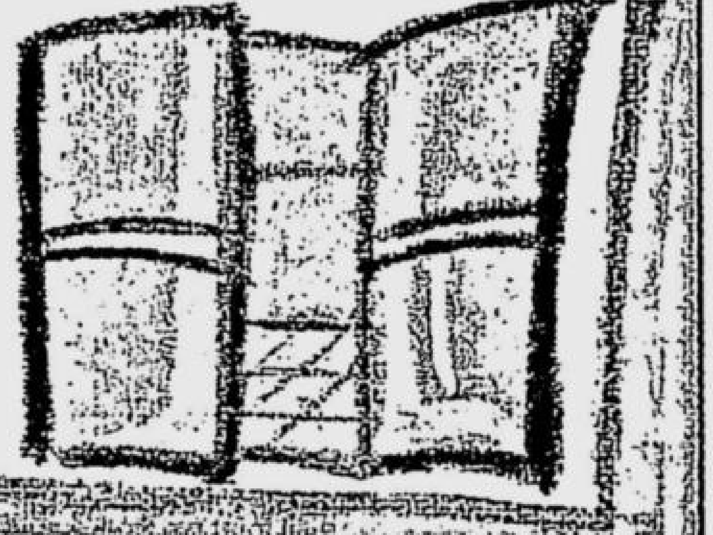
As for me, I want to celebrate a simple New Year by praying together with my family at the strike of midnight, eating a good meal with them, making a little noise and jumping up and down (but only when no one is looking!).

Happy New Year!

Sound Familiar ?
Write down your thoughts now and send them to JI. Who knows, you might just get published!

Straight from JI Readers

You can now reach us via e-mail! Our address is **jl@inquirer.com.ph** Don't forget to include your complete name, age, snail mail address and your phone number. Hope to hear from you soon!



Of Books and Nerds

DEAR Editor,

I am a big Harry Potter fan. I have as much merchandise I can carry and I wish to get more. Harry Potter books are fantastic. ... But being Harry Potter's biggest fan had its downsides too. People think that we fans of HP are nerds or geeks. Being a bookworm isn't bad, right? I also read stuff like magazines and stuff, but I love reading the books. I just wish that people would understand that we are not nerds or nerdy. Also, please feature more fun, though educational, topics rather than stuff about anime.

—**ISABEL CUERVA**, Miriam College Grade School, Quezon City

DEAR Isabel,

*Being a bookworm is not bad at all! It will bring you worlds of good things. And don't worry about being called a nerd or geek. Just as long as you're secure and happy about how you see yourself, those words won't matter much. Hermione Granger is also a bookworm and look how smart she is. Keep on reading those book! Oh, and thanks for the suggestion. We always try to put out a balance JI issue every week so that all it's readers—bookworms, anime fans, craft kids, sports buffs, etc.—will be happy. Cheers!—**The Editor***

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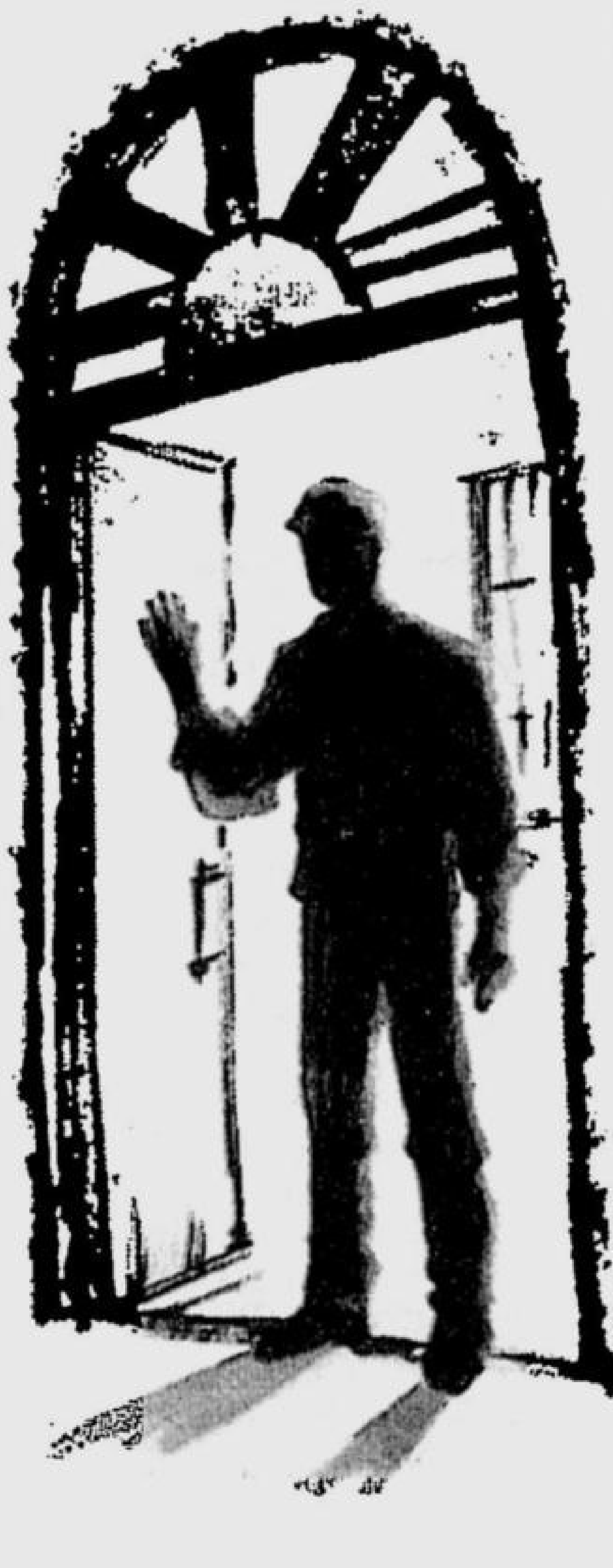
FOR or BY KIDS

Farewell, Ti

STORY BY J.E. ROYECA
ILLUSTRATIONS BY YASMIN S. ONG

"Aristeo and Leoncio were close to tears. Their Tio Jose was a doctor, writer and a very kind uncle. Why would somebody hurt him?"



"*TIO* JOSE, why did you come back?" Leoncio asked. "I wished you were already in Spain. *Nanay* said it was better if you were there."

Jose patted Leoncio, stroking his hair lightly. "I did not come back. I was sent back."

"By whom *Tio* Jose?" Aristeo butted in.

"By the Spaniards," Jose answered. He stood up to unpack the three *bayong* that his nephews brought with them. "Is this the stove I've asked *Señora* Sisa to send here?"

"Yes, *Tio*," Leoncio answered. *Nanay* said the Spaniards have imprisoned you here in Fort. . .Fort—"

"It's Fort Santiago, cousin!" Aristeo finished it for him.

"Why, *Tio* Jose? I don't understand," Leoncio said, looking around that dungeon—like prison cell. It looked cavernous. Its walls and pillars were thick and heavy.

Jose smiled at the two. He put down the stove at the table, beside his papers. "How old are you two now?"

"I'm 13," Aristeo proudly said. "I'm already in the secondary course at the Ateneo.

Leoncio counted his fingers before shouting, "I'm 11 years old! I also study at the Ateneo."

"Good, very good," Jose said, very proud of his nephews. "Like what I always tell you, study well. It is your most potent weapon as you go on with your lives, as you live with men in society, and aim for what you want to make of yourselves."

ARISTEO SMILED. He knew that his *Tio* Jose was always speaking seriously when it came to their studies. He wanted them to be well-educated so that they would be good, if not better, citizens in thoughts, hearts, and deeds. He always reminded them to behave like gentlemen.

"You studied in Ateneo, didn't you *Tio* Jose?" Aristeo asked.

"Yes," Jose answered. He fixed the alcohol stove, testing if it still worked.

"*Nanay* had told us that you received lots of honors and prizes," Leoncio added. "She said you were a very intelligent student."

"Maybe," Jose shrugged.

"So why would they imprison you here?" Aristeo argued. "You're a doctor, aren't you? You're supposed to be in hospitals curing the sick."

"How long will you be here, *Tio* Jose?" Leoncio asked.

Jose shrugged again. He had been in that prison cell since he arrived in Manila from Spain on November 3, 1896. The cold month of December would be over now but he still remained a prisoner.

Aristeo sat down on a chair, beside his uncle. He meekly looked up to him. "I heard *Tatay* saying we might not be able to see you again. Why *Tio* Jose?"

Leoncio also sat down on the other side of Jose. He was not saying anything but was about to cry. He also heard everyone in their house in Tondo, Manila, saying that his *Tio* Jose might no longer be with them forever.

Jose calmed the two, smiling at them. "Boys, sometimes we don't like what is happening to us. There are times when we're proud of what's going on around us. . . When I die, I would rest but I know I died fighting for the sake of our country and our fellow Filipinos."

Aristeo and Leoncio were close to tears. Their *Tio* Jose was a doctor, writer and a very kind uncle. Why would somebody hurt him? They could not really understand why.

"Why were you jailed, *Tio* Jose," Aristeo again asked.

"IT'S QUITE a long story," Jose said. "I wanted our fellow countrymen to be free from ignorance, injustices, and abuses committed against them by our Spanish rulers. But they, the Spaniards, did not like it. I only desired that our countrymen embrace the fruits of liberty, education, labor, and dignity. But again the Spaniards did not like what I desired."

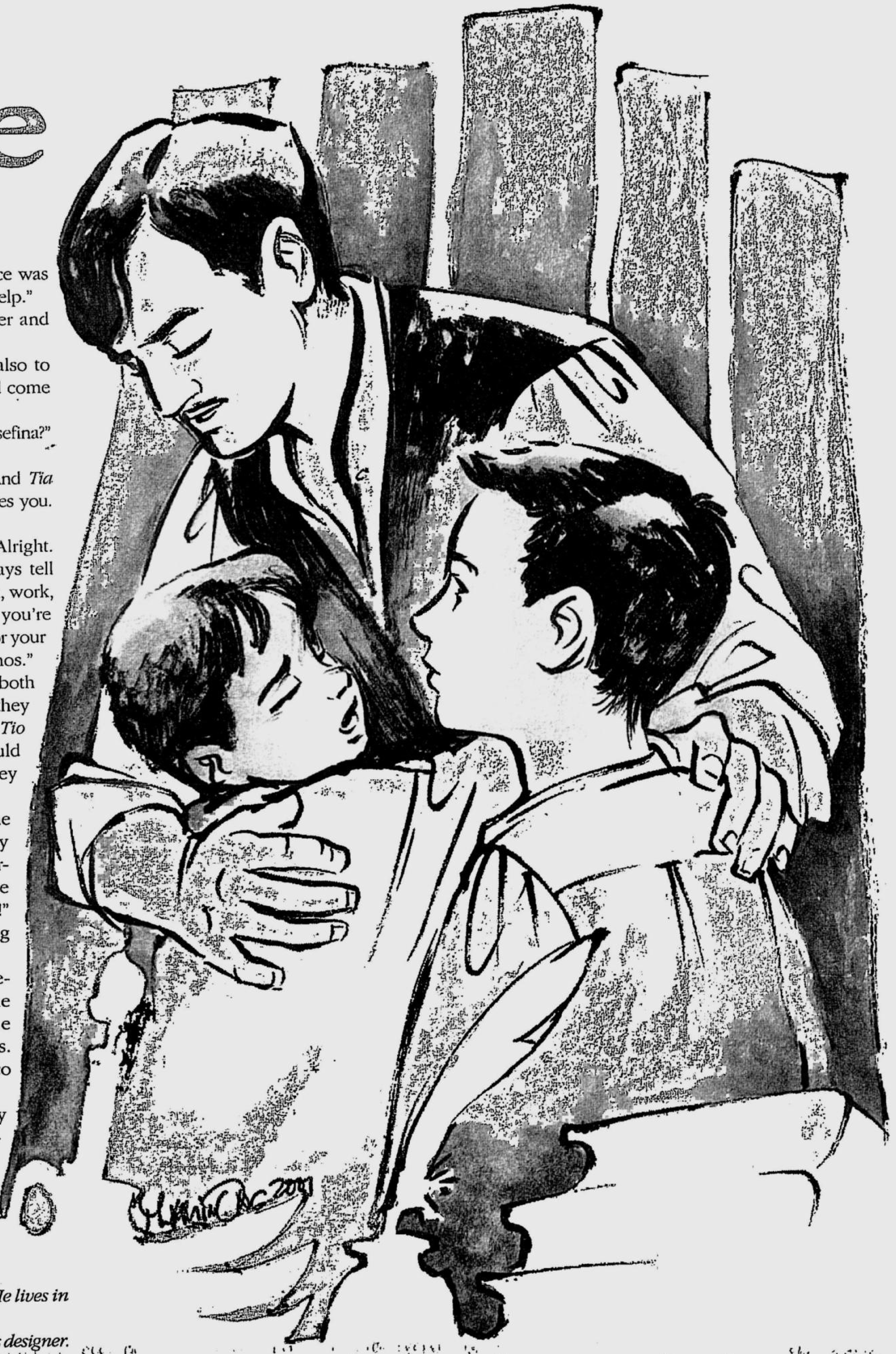
Jose stood up. "Come on, you two. The visiting hour is over. The guard will soon come in. Who would fetch you here?"

"*Señora* Iday, our servant," Aristeo said. "She's at the corridor."

"Leoncio, kindly tell your mother," Jose said deeply, "that I am thanking her for all the help she has given me, for everything."

Leoncio nodded. His mother, *Señora* Sisa, was one of

o Jose



Jose's older sisters.

"Aristeo, kindly tell *Señor* Silvestre," Jose's voice was firm, "that I am also thanking him also for all the help."

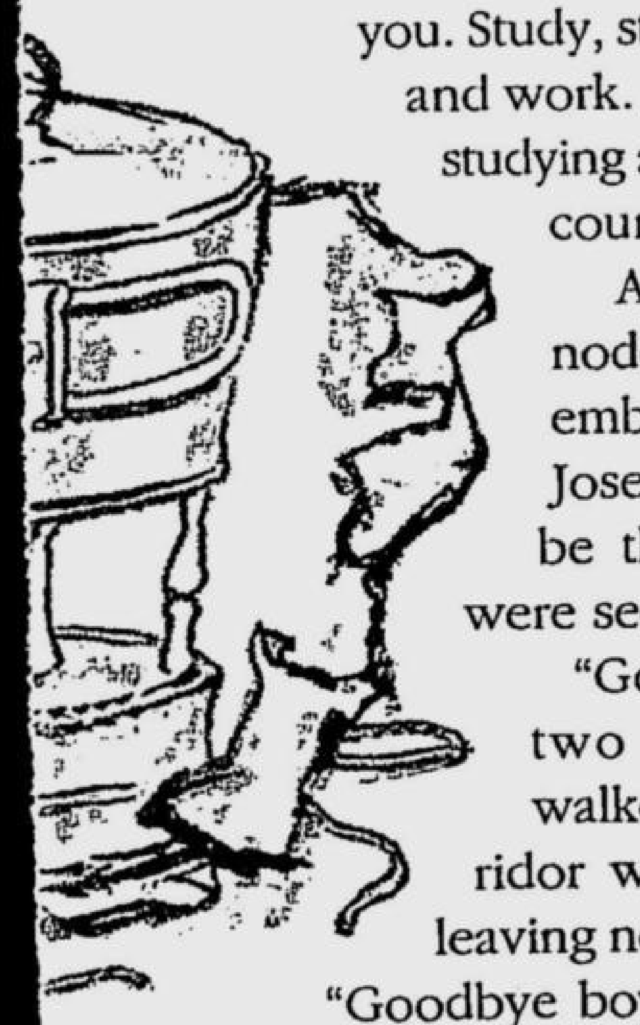
Aristeo nodded. *Señor* Silvestre was his father and one of Jose's brothers-in-law.

"*Lola* and *Tia* Trining will be coming here also to visit you," Leoncio said. "*Tia* Josefina said she'd come sooner."

"How's *Nanay*, your *Lola?*" Jose asked. "And Josefina?" Josefina was his dear wife.

"*Lola* is always worried," Leoncio answered. "And *Tia* Josefina too. I saw her crying one night. She misses you. Both *Lola* and *Tia* Josefina are in our house."

Jose wiped his eyes with a handkerchief "Alright. Go now. Remember what I always tell you. Study, study, and study. Work, work, and work. And don't forget that you're studying and will be working for your country and fellow Filipinos."



Aristeo and Leoncio both nodded. They cried as they embraced their beloved *Tio* Jose, thinking that it would be the last time that they were seeing him.

"Goodbye, *Tio* Jose," the two boys said as they walked down the silent corridor waving at him. "We're leaving now, *Tio* Jose, farewell!"

"Goodbye boys," Jose said, waving back at them. "Farewell!"

Some days later, on the morning of December 30, 1896, Jose was executed by the Spaniards through a firing squad in the Bagumbayan Field, a park outside Intramuros. He was immediately buried at the nearby Paco Cemetery.

Aristeo and Leoncio cried silently when they heard the news of their *Tio* Jose's death. Everyone in their family was mourning.

Aristeo and Leoncio did not forget what their *Tio* Jose advised them. They really studied well. They became physicians like their beloved uncle, Dr. Jose Rizal.

J.E. *likes to read and collect history books. He lives in Kalayaan Village, Pasig City.*

Yasmin *is a freelance illustrator and graphics designer. She's a member of Ang Ilustrador ng Kabataan.*

Arts and Crafts with the TRENDSETTER

For Mica Papa, 12, everything old is new again!

BY MARGAUX ORTIZ

Kids'r'rrific

ON SPECIAL days when students at the Philippine Women's University Jose Abad Santos Memorial School (PWU-JASMS) are not required to wear uniforms, 12-year-old Micaela Papa would show up dressed in colorful vests and skirts, and adorned with intricate bracelets and earrings. Mica is always proud to say that she made all of them herself.

"People would compliment my 'creations' and ask me to make the same things for them," says Mica. Her bracelets, skirts, chokers, earrings, bags and bandannas are always a 'hit' with her schoolmates. "We all end up wearing the same colorful stuff and having the same style," she laughs.

The sixth-grader adds that even teachers she doesn't know praise her unique fashion sense. "Maybe that's the reason why I was given the "most creative" award in school," says Mica.

Mica's interest in crafts began when she was 8 years old. Her friends then made a business out of making friendship bracelets and other jewelry. Mica learned the basic techniques from them and eventually improvised on her own.

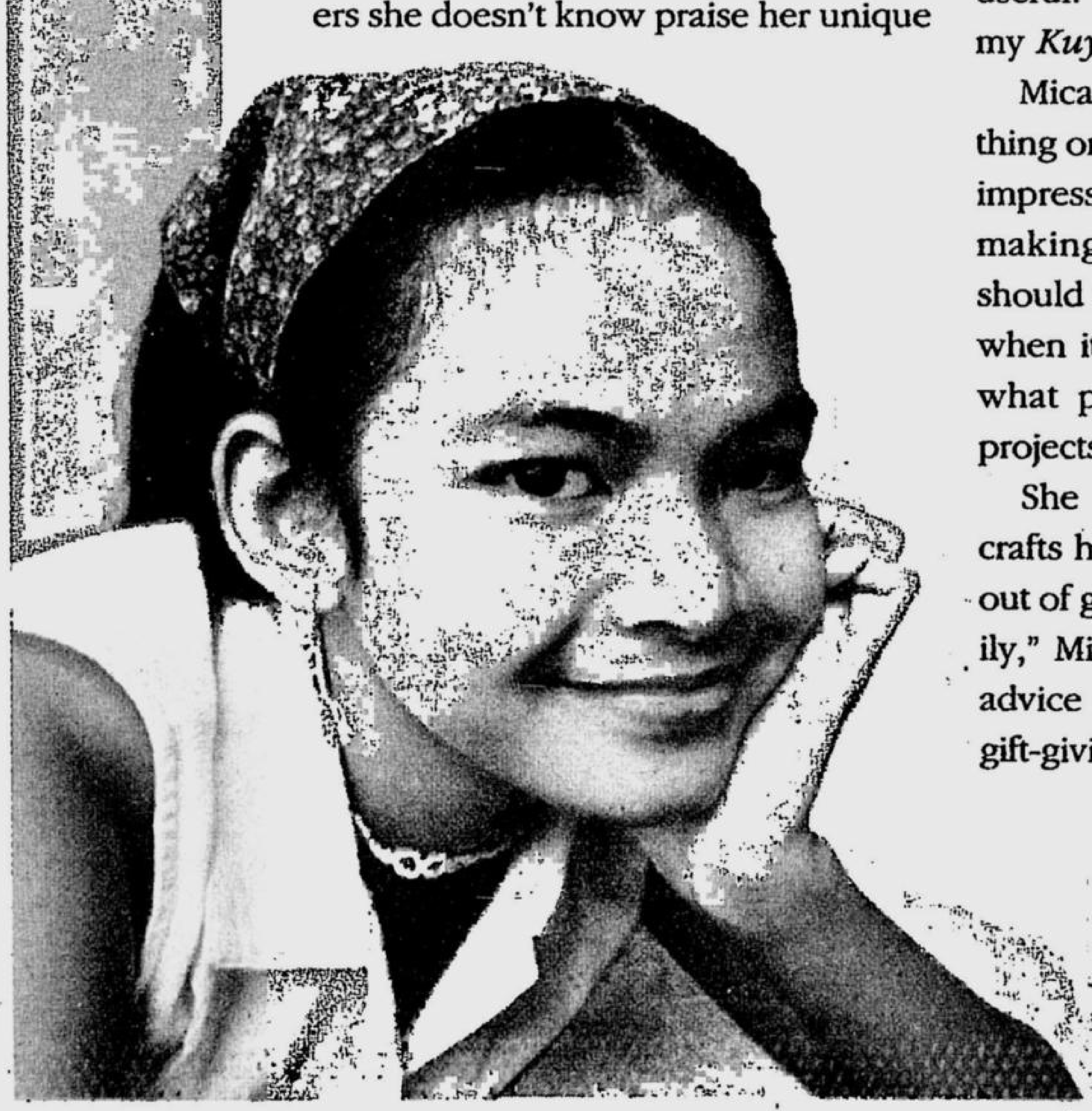
"It's pretty easy once you are already familiar with the basic technique," she relates. She adds that she gets the ideas to make her creations more intricate from art kits, magazines and craft shows she sees on television.

Old becomes snazzy

Mica also believes that everything, even those things most people think should already be discarded, could still be made useful. "That's why I made a bag out of my *Kuya* Leo's old pants," she grins.

Mica says that persistence is the only thing one needs to be able to create such impressive accessories. "Once you begin making a bracelet for example, you should imagine how beautiful it will look when it is finished," she relates. "That's what pushes me to complete all the projects I've started."

She says that her special interest in crafts has its rewards. "I don't really run out of gifts to give to my friends and family," Mica smiles. What timely words of advice especially during this season of gift-giving!



CREATIVE GAL. Mica expresses herself by making her own trinkets and accessories.

DENNIS SABANGAN

R U RRIFIC?

'Rrific kids are smart
'Rrific kids are fun
Some aren't in the honors list
But get their homework done

Somehow the world's
a better place
I know this much is true
Hey 'Rrific kid!
We know you're there
We love you 'cause you're you!

If you think you're `Rriffic' or know someone who is, fill out the nomination form below and send it to:

Junior Inquirer
'KIDS'R'RRIFIC' Page
Phil. Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces cor.
Yague & Mascardo Sts.
1231 Makati City

Chosen nominees will be featured on this page and will get a **free Junior Inquirer T-shirt!**

Kid 'r'rrific
nomination form

I nominate: ______________________

Age: ________

I think she's/he's 'Rrific because:
(Here's a tip! Write a detailed description of a good deed, project or accomplishment by your nominee.)

____

She/he lives at

____

and studies at ______________________

Her/his contact number is: ______________________

Sender's Name: ______________________

Sender's Age & School: ________, ______________

Sender's Address: ______________________

Sender's Contact No. ______________________

My Teacher Can Fly!

Teacher Cindy of Miriam College morphs into "student pilot" on weekends

By Mae Astrid Tobias

. . .NOT on a broomstick or by levitation but on a plane. Real high-flying airplanes like the Cessna 152 and the Cessna 172. These two are only examples of planes Cindy Montemayor is allowed to fly.

On weekdays, 24-year-old Cindy is Ms Montemayor to the Grade 4 students of Miriam College Grade School. She talks about nouns, pronouns, verbs and spelling.

On weekends, she is a student herself. She goes to aviation school, where she is taught how to become a pilot.

Grumpy Passenger

"You can't just ride a plane and just fly it," Cindy says. She has to spend so many hours in ground school to learn stuff like aviation rules, computing nautical miles and plotting destinations before getting the chance to fly an actual plane.

"Actually, I hate flying," Cindy explains, "I hate being the passenger." She doesn't like having to sit down for 14 hours in a cramped space, waiting to reach her destination.

"When I tried flying on my own as the pilot, it's different," she says. "I do not get airsick. Everything up there is clear and peaceful. It is like you left all the clutter on the ground."

An animal lover, too

When she's not teaching kids or studying about airplanes, Cindy likes to hang out with her pets. She has two pet dogs at home and she likes going horseback riding whenever her family goes to their home in Pampanga.

One she had to miss work because Tina, her Great Dane, was giving birth. She had to remove the membrane covering the puppies because Tina didn't know how. One of the puppies almost died but she was able to save it by gently massaging it and keeping it warm in her hands.

In school, a lot of her students look up to her. Some of them even want to become pilots like her. To them, Cindy offers this advice.

"Do good in school first. Once you reach 16 (the age a person is allowed to attend flying school) then tell your parents you want to fly. I think they will support you in anything you want to do."

I'LL DRIVE. Teacher Cindy prefers steerubg a plane rather than being a plain passenger.

Do you know a grown-up who

- is fun to be with
- has an exciting job
- keeps an amazing hobby
- is all of the above???

If you know a grown-up whom all kids will love, give him or her the stamp:

A.K.A. COOL

Just fill out the nomination form below and tell us why your fave grown-up is the absolute coolest. If your nominee is chosen, ***YOU'LL*** *get a free JI T-shirt! Now that's really cool.*

A.K.A. COOL
is an 'adult known as cool'
They're the folks
in our own family
Or the people
we meet in school.

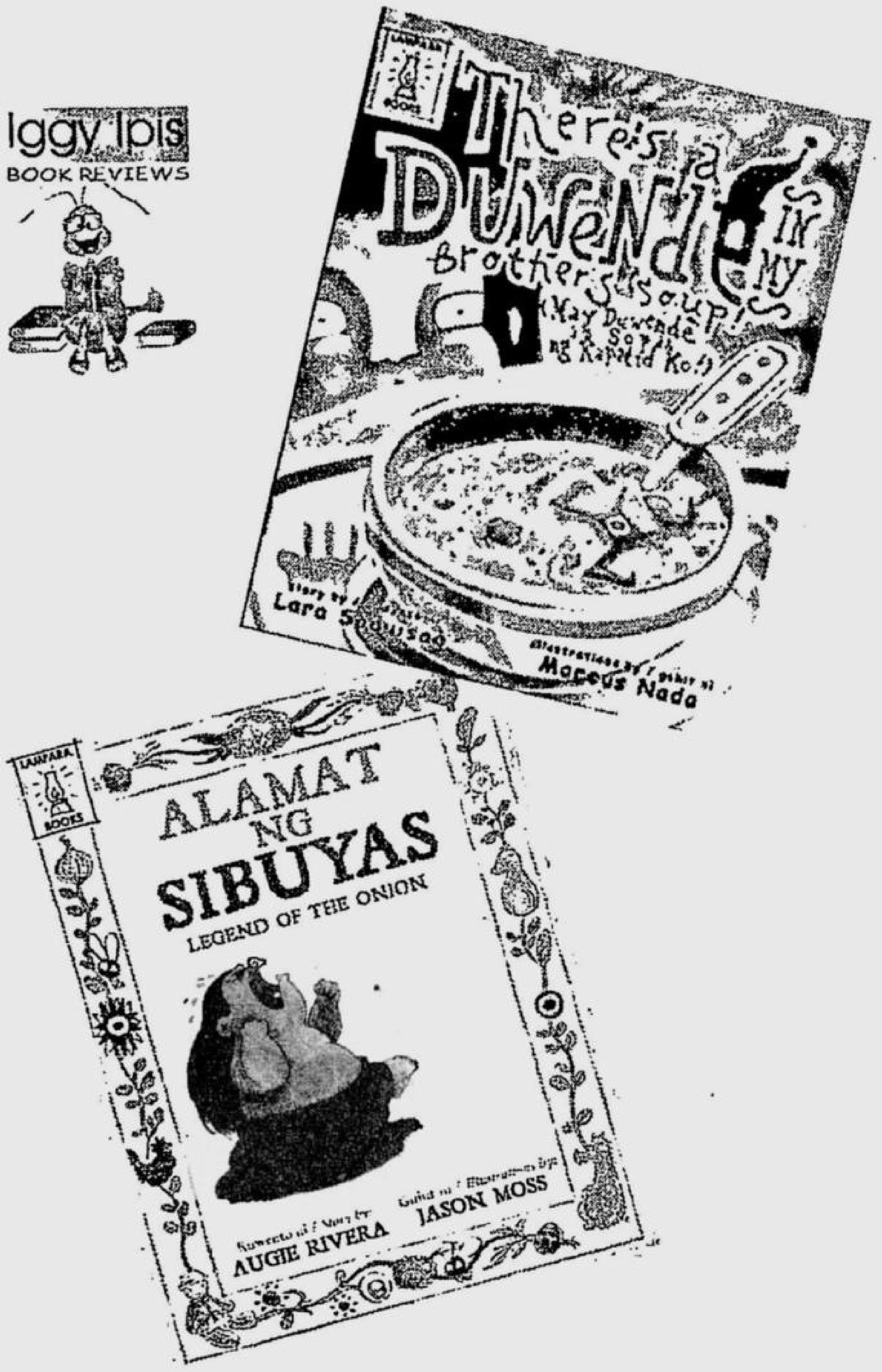
I nominate ________________.
He/She is ____ years old and is my __________________.
Here are five super solid reasons why I think you should write about him/her:
1)____________________;
2)____________________;
3)____________________;
4)____________________;
and
5)____________________.

My nominee lives at__________ ____________________.
Give him/her a call at__________ ____________ or send him/her an e-mail at_______________.
By the way, I'm____________ ____________________.
I'm _____ years old.
My address is ____________________.
You may call me at ____________________.

You can Bet Your Onion It's Not a Duwende

Sample Lampara Books' newest titles

Iggy Ipis
BOOK REVIEWS


There's a Duwende in My Brother's Soup!
(May Duwende sa Sopas ng Kapatid Ko!)
Story by Lara Saguisag
Illustrations by Marcus Nada
LAMPARA BOOKS
ALAMAT NG SIBUYAS
LEGEND OF THE ONION
AUGIE RIVERA
JASON MOSS

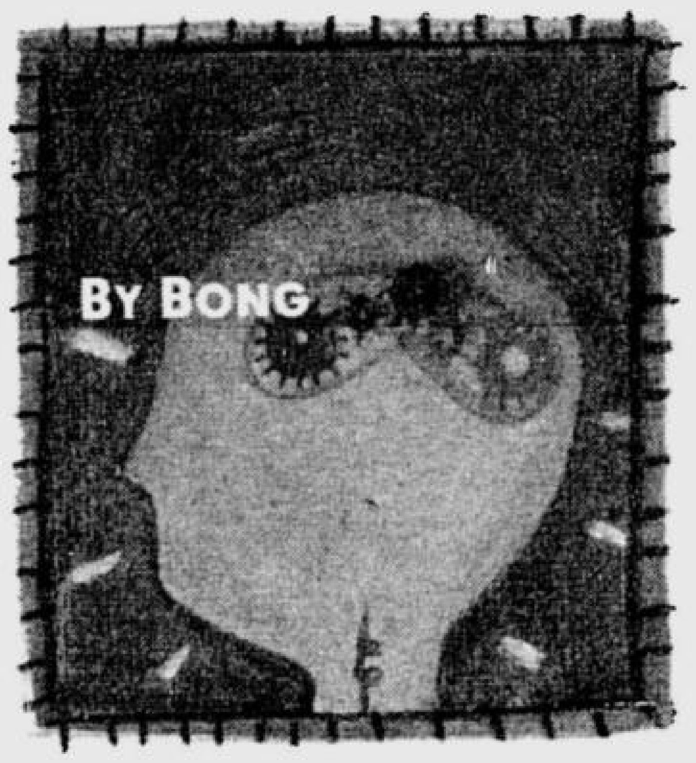
EVER had a pesky little brother who would cry false tears? Well, if you do, I suggest you grab a copy of Lampara Books' "Alamat ng Sibuyas" or "The Legend of the Onion."

Author Augie Rivera tells a funny tale about Sibuyan, a little, big girl who cries fake tears to get what she wants. Uh-oh! If you're little brother keeps on doing this too, he might end up just like Sibuyan: turned into a super spicy, *ginisa* ingredient.

As always, Jason Moss' riotous drawings add laughs to Sibuyan's crybaby tale.

Next, first-time author Lara Saguisag's "There's a Duwende in My Brother's Soup" is about a girl who has a very special brother. She thinks a little man keeps her brother occupied and that this is probably why her brother pays little attention to many things around him. Truth is, her brother has autism, a mental disorder originating in infancy that is characterized by self-absorption, inability to interact socially, repetitive behavior, and language dysfunction. Find out how the girl makes sense of her brother's condition. Illustrations are by Marcus Nada.

Check out both books in any National Bookstore branch.



'Happy New Year!'

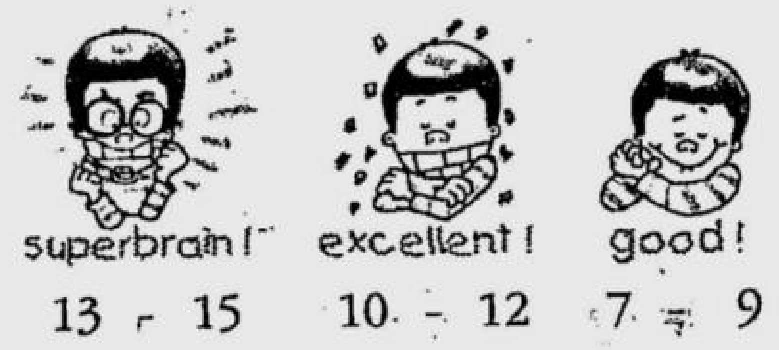
LAST week, we did a quiz on how different peoples around the world say "Merry Christmas." This time, let's give "Happy New Year" a go. So, can you match the language with the greeting?

1. Feliz año nuevo
    - Italian
    - Spanish
2. Frohes neues jahr
    - German
    - Dutch
3. Antum salimoun
    - Arabic
    - Greek
4. Kung Hei Fat Choi
    - Mandarin
    - Cantonese
5. Buon anno
    - Italian
    - Portuguese
6. Selamat Tahun Baru
    - Hindu
    - Indonesian
7. Subh Nab Bars
    - Persian
    - Hindi
8. Schastlivogo novogo goda
    - Hebrew
    - Russian
9. Akemashite Omedeto
    - Japanese
    - Korean
10. Bonne année
    - Catalan
    - French
11. Sawadee Pee Mai
    - Thai
    - Swahili
12. Heri Za Mwaka Mpyaº
    - Afrikaans
    - Swahili
13. Hauoli Makahiki Hou
    - Hawaiian
    - Malay
14. L'Shannah Tovah
    - Hebrew
    - Irish
15. Chuc Mung Tan Nien
    - Singaporean
    - Vietnamese

Answers :

1. Spanish
2. German
3. Arabic
4. Cantonese
5. Italian
6. Indonesian
7. Hindi
8. Russian
9. Japanese
10. French
11. Thai
12. Swahili
13. Hawaiian
14. Hebrew
15. Vietnamese.

Ratings :


superbrain!
13 - 15
excellent!
10 - 12
good!
7 - 9

FOR or By KIDS

‘J.R.’

BY JAMES MICHAEL ONG, ABIGAIL KO AND SHERIDAN LIM
ART BY JOANNE DE LEON

There was a man wearing a coat,

calmly walking down the dusty road.

Accompanied by a hundred guards,

into the wide and crowded yard.

This is the morning that he will die,

but in his breath you can’t hear a sigh.

He was so bold like a thunderbolt,

for he freed the nation

from the Spaniard’s hold.

“Tat, tat, tat, tat.”

The man stood straight at the spot

“Tat, tat, tat, tat.”

The guard yelled and he got shot.

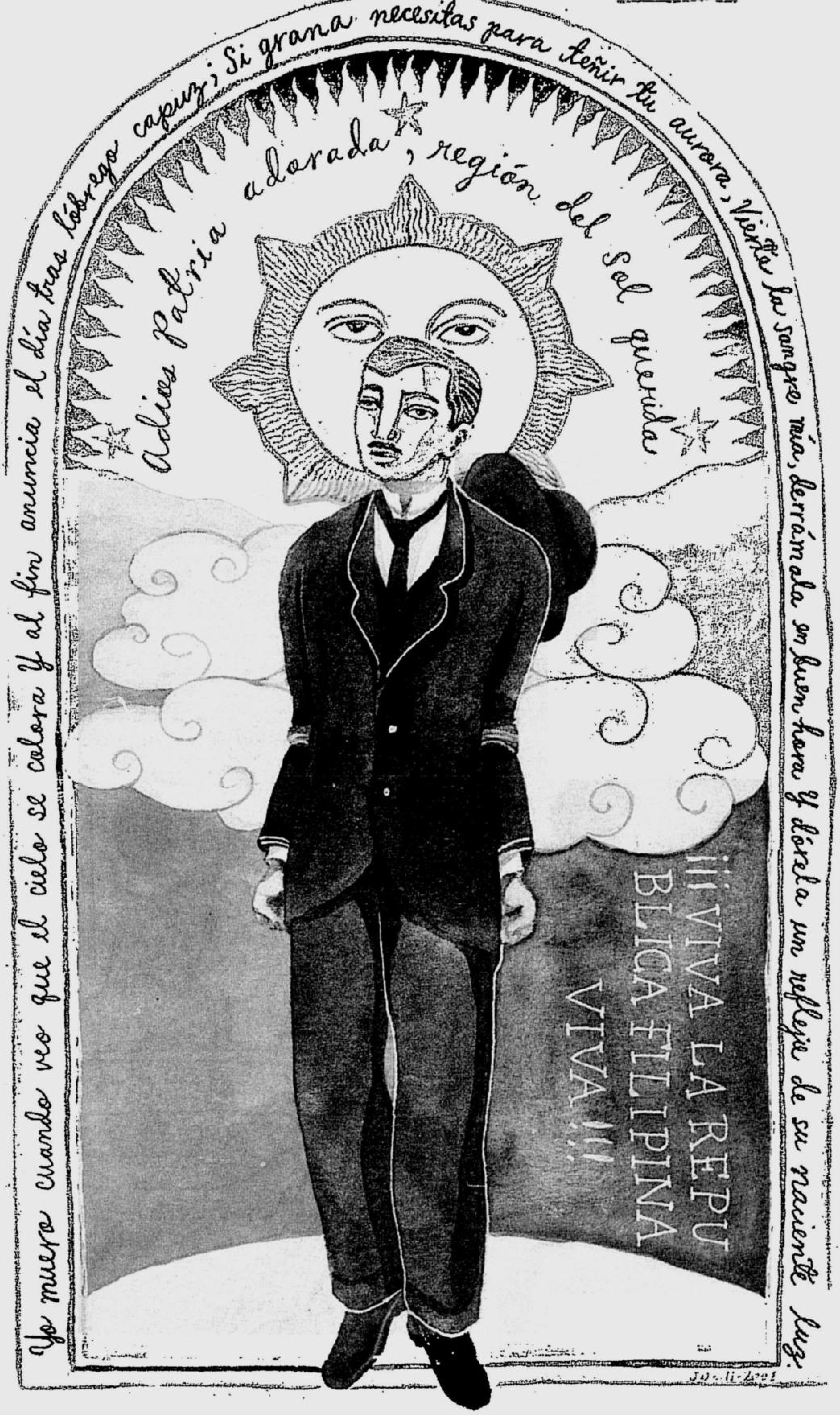
Today he is respected as a courageous man,

from a historical Filipino clan.

He died to free his countrymen,

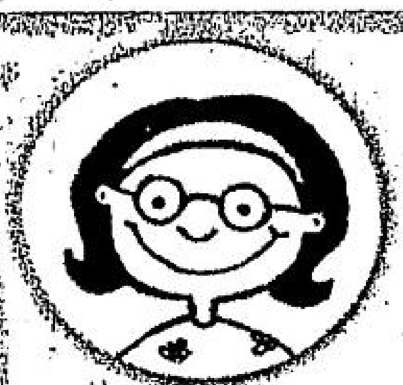
from the oppressive Spaniard’s hands.

***James**, **Abigail** and **Sheridan** are junior high school students at the Makati Hope Christian School. They wrote the poem for their English class.*
***Joanne** is an award-winning illustrator of children’s books. She is a member of Ang Ilustrador ng Kabataan.*


Yo muero cuando veo que el cielo se colora y al fin anuncia el día tras lóbrego capuz; Si grana necesitas para teñir tu aurora, Vierta la sangre mía, derrámala en buen hora y dórela un reflejo de su naciente luz.
Adios Patria adorada, región del Sol querida
¡¡¡VIVA LA REPU BLICA FILIPINA VIVA!!!

THE LUNCH BOX

by Katrina B. Villa

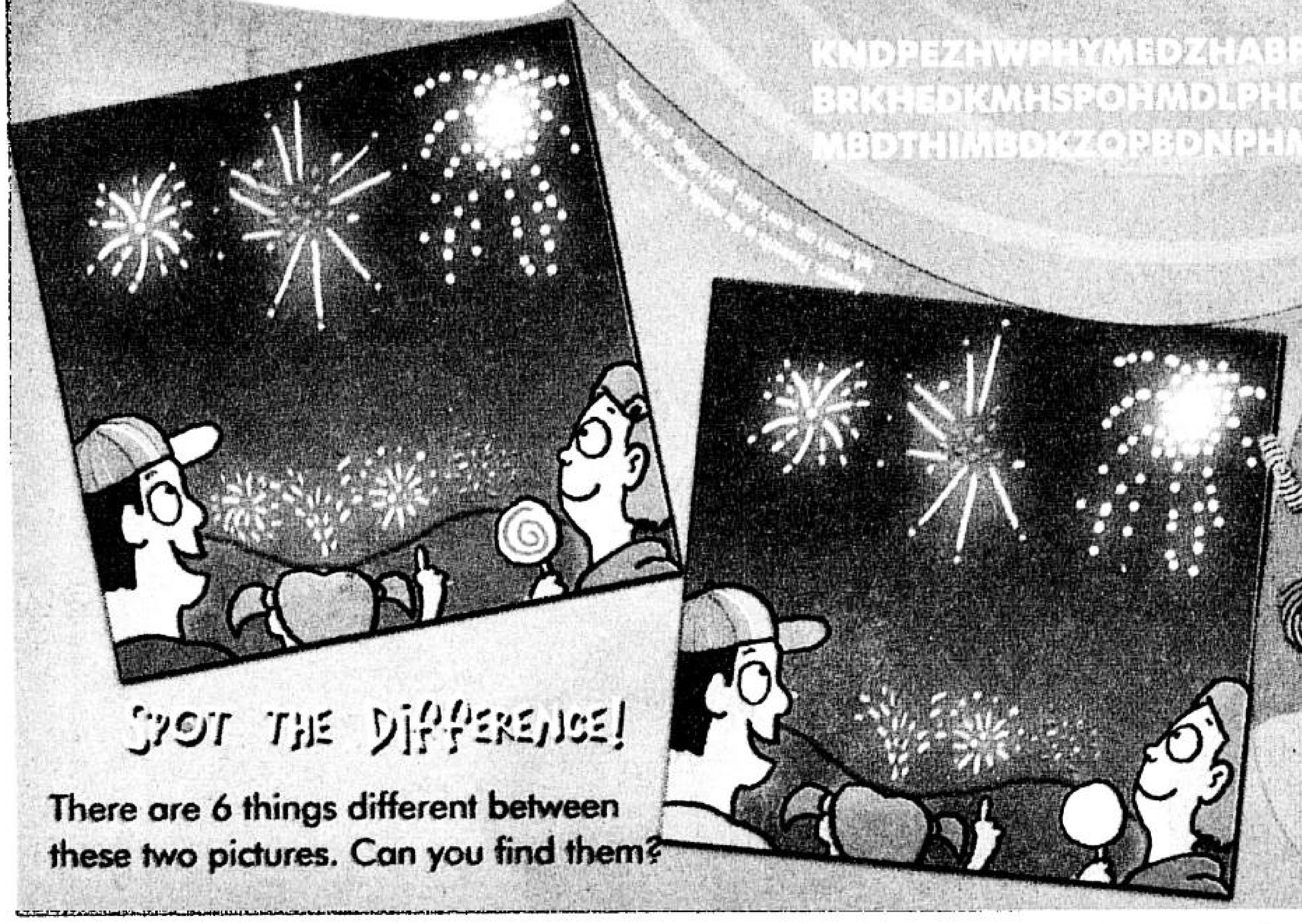


Poetic Patty's Parlor

I always like to make them
Though they're sometimes hard to keep
But if I do, then hip-hip yahoo!
The rewards I'm sure to reap.

What is Patty talking about? Remove the letters B,D,K, M,P,Z and H to find out!

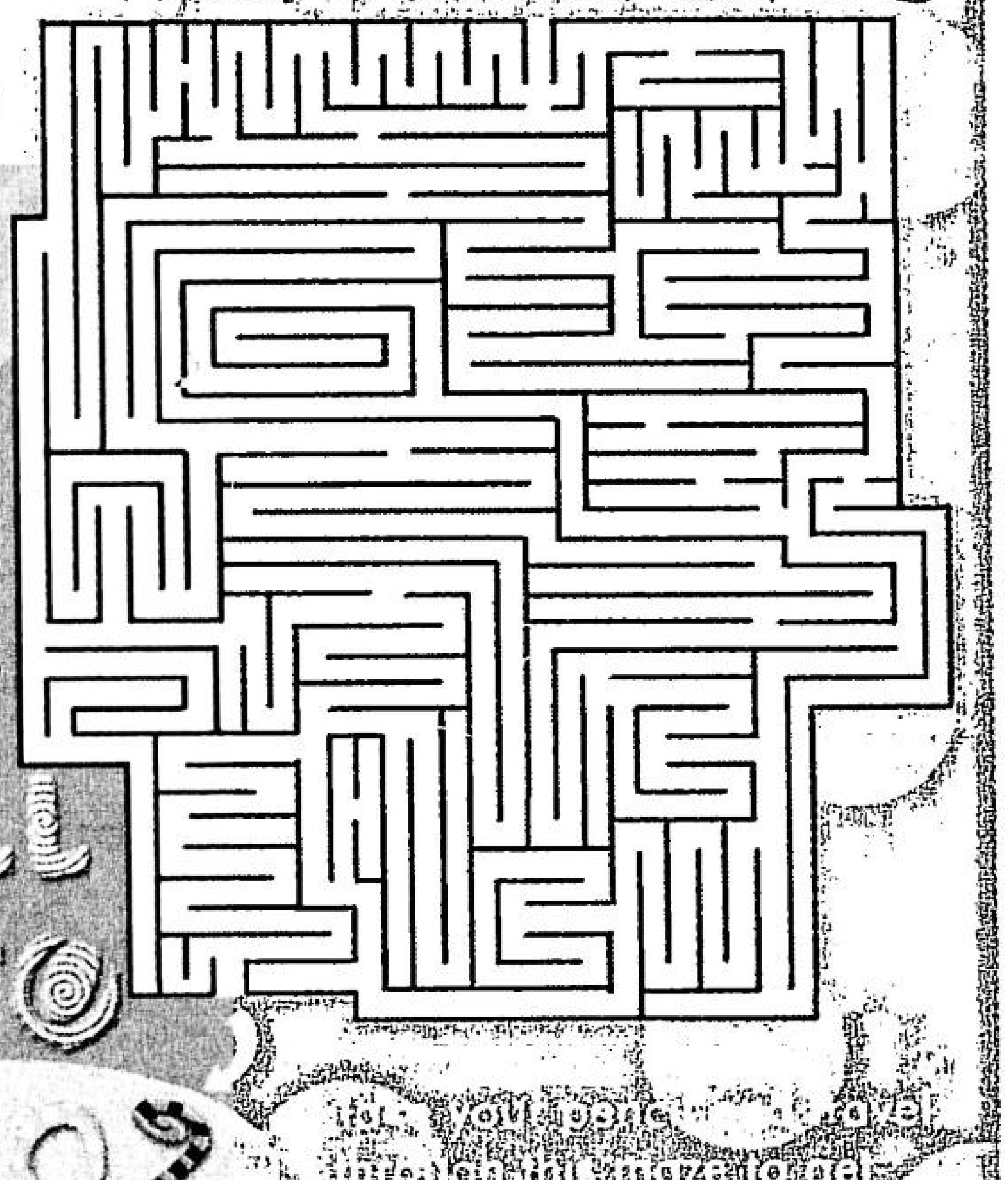
KNDPEZHWPHYMEDZHABPMRD'HBS
BRKHEDKMHSPOHMDLPHDUKPHZH
MBDTHIMBDKZOPBDNPHMDKZSPB



SPOT THE DIFFERENCE!

There are 6 things different between these two pictures. Can you find them?

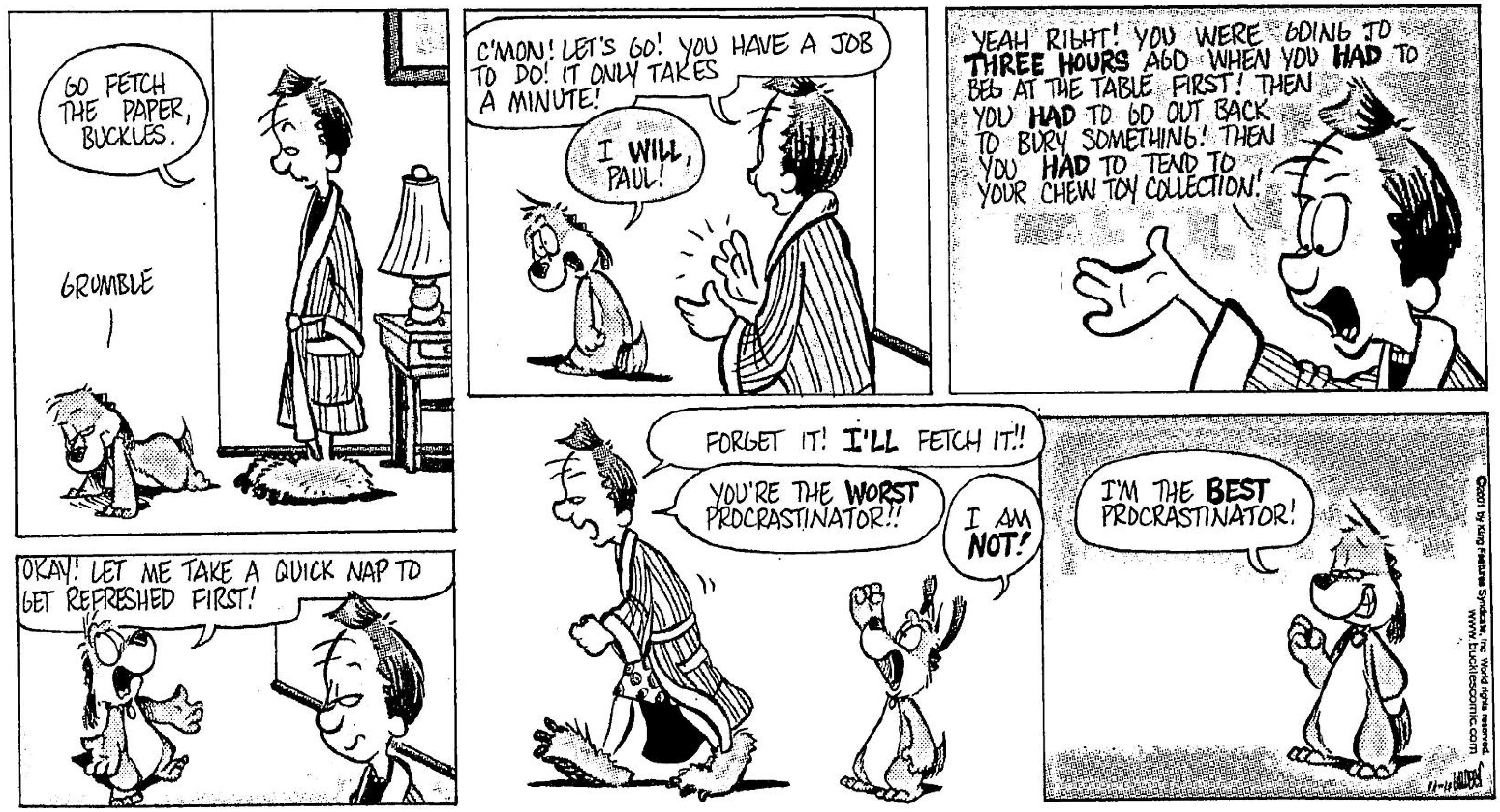
LET'S ALL GO TO 2002



[illegible] you [illegible] travel through this maze to get to the New Year! Have fun!

BUCKLES

BY DAVID GILBERT


GO FETCH THE PAPER, BUCKLES.
GRUMBLE
C'MON! LET'S GO! YOU HAVE A JOB TO DO! IT ONLY TAKES A MINUTE!
I WILL, PAUL!
YEAH RIGHT! YOU WERE GOING TO THREE HOURS AGO WHEN YOU HAD TO BEG AT THE TABLE FIRST! THEN YOU HAD TO GO OUT BACK TO BURY SOMETHING! THEN YOU HAD TO TEND TO YOUR CHEW TOY COLLECTION!
OKAY! LET ME TAKE A QUICK NAP TO GET REFRESHED FIRST!
FORGET IT! I'LL FETCH IT!!
YOU'RE THE WORST PROCRASTINATOR!!
I AM NOT!
I'M THE BEST PROCRASTINATOR!

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